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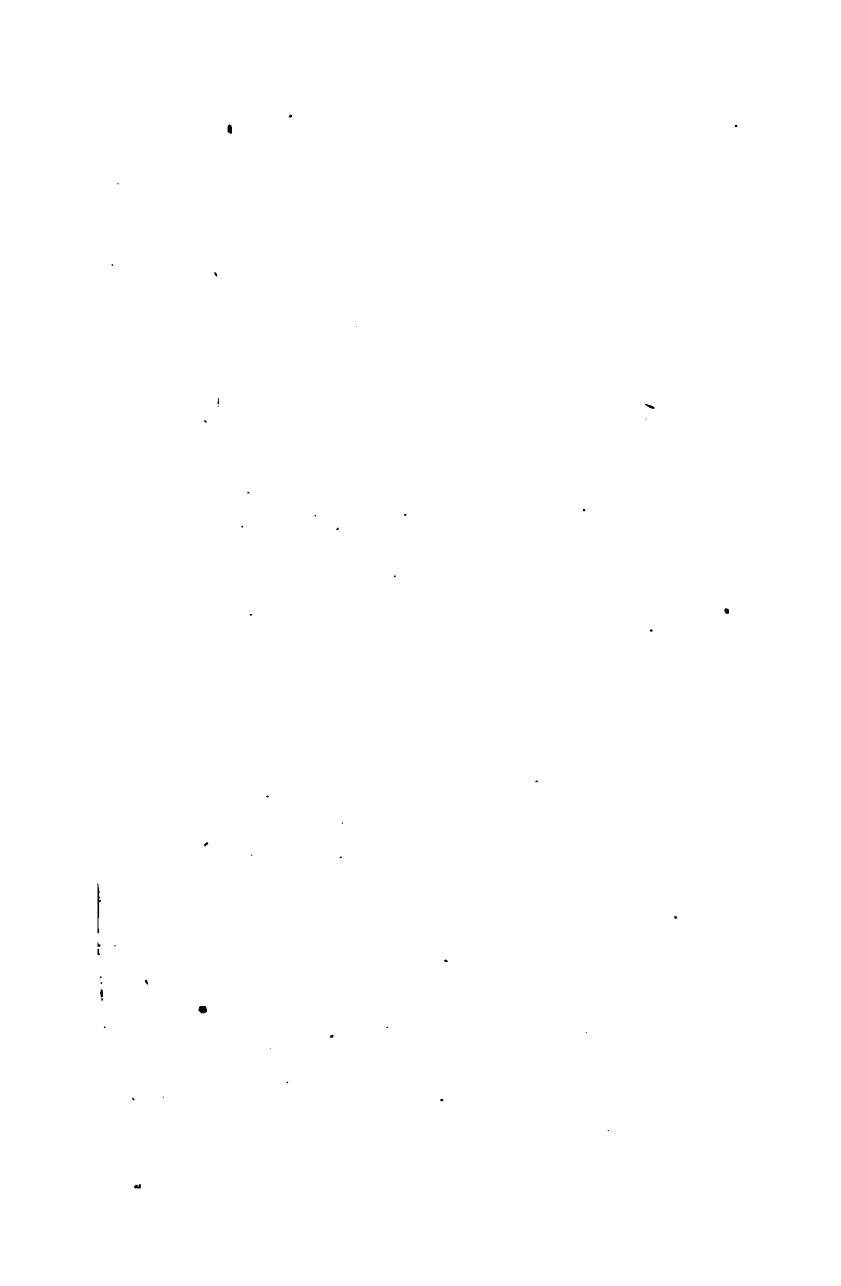


FROM THE
FRANCIS PARKMAN
MEMORIAL FUND
FOR
CANADIAN HISTORY

ESTABLISHED IN 1908



THE
LETTERS
OF
PLINY.



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THE
LETTERS

of
Plinius Tacitus Sacer d. n.
PLINY THE CONSUL.

WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS.

By WILLIAM MELMOTH, Esq.

VOL. II.

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THE
L E T T E R S

OF

PLINY.

BOOK SEVENTH.

LETTER I.

TO RESTITUTUS.

THIS obstinate distemper which hangs upon you greatly alarms me; and though I know how extremely temperate you are, yet I am afraid your disease should get the better of your moderation. Let me entreat you, then, to resist it with a determined abstemiousness; a remedy, be assured, of all others the most laudable, as well as the most salutary. There is nothing impracticable in what I recommend; it is a rule, at least, which I always enjoin my family to observe with respect to myself. I tell them, should I be attacked with any disorder,

I hope that I shall desire nothing of which I ought either to be ashamed, or have reason to repent : However, if my distemper should prevail over my judgment, I forbid them to give me any thing but by the consent of my physicians ; and I assure the people about me, that I shall resent their compliance with me in things improper, as much as another man would their refusal. I had once a most violent fever : When the fit was a little abated, and I had been anointed,* my physician offered me something to drink ; I desired he would first feel my pulse, and, upon his seeming to think the paroxysm was not quite abated, I instantly returned the cup, though it was just at my lips. Afterwards, when I was preparing to go into the bath, twenty days from the first attack of my illness, perceiving the physicians whispering together, I enquired what they were saying ? They replied, they were of opinion I might possibly bathe with safety ; nevertheless, that they were not without some suspicion of hazard. What occasion then is there, said I, of bath-

* Unction was much esteemed, as a remedy in certain cases, by the ancient physicians. Celsus, who flourished, it is supposed, about Pliny's time, expressly recommends it in the remission of acute distempers : "*Ungi leniterque pertractari corpus, etiam in acutis et recentibus morbis oportet; in remissione tamen,*" &c.—*CÆLSI Med. ed. Almeloveen*, p. 88.

ing at all? And thus, with great complacency, I gave up a pleasure I was upon the point of enjoying, and abstained from the bath with the same satisfaction I was preparing to enter it. I mention this, not only in order to enforce my advice by example, but also that this letter may be a sort of tie upon me, to observe the same resolute abstinence for the future. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO JUSTUS.

ARE you not inconsistent, when you assure me you have no intermission from business, and yet express, at the same time, an earnest desire to see my works, upon which even the idle will scarce bestow some of their useless hours? I will not, then, break in upon your occupations during this summer season; but when the return of winter shall make it probable, that your evenings, at least, may be disengaged, I will look over my trifles for something to amuse your vacant hours. In the mean while, I shall be well satisfied if my letters should not prove troublesome, as I suspect they are, and therefore shorten them. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO PRÆSENS.

ARE you determined, then, to pass your whole time between Lucania† and Campania‡? Your answer, I suppose, will be, that the former is your native country, and the latter that of your wife. This, I admit, may justify a long absence; but I cannot allow it as a reason for a perpetual one. But are you resolved, in good earnest, never to return to Rome; that theatre of honours, preferment, and amicable connections of every sort? Are you obstinately determined to live your own master, to sleep as long as you please, and to rise when you think proper? Will you never change your country garb for the dress of the town, but spend your whole days unembarrassed by our crowded streets? It is time, however, you should revisit this our scene of hurry, were it only that your rural pleasures may not grow languid by uninterrupted possession: Appear at the levees of the great, that you may enjoy the same honour yourself with more satisfaction;

† Comprehending the Basilicata, a province in the kingdom of Naples.

‡ Now called Campagna di Roma.—See Book VI. Let. 4. note.

and mix in our crowds, that you may have a keener relish for the charms of solitude. But am I not imprudently retarding the friend I would recal? It is these very circumstances, perhaps, that induce you every day more and more to wrap yourself up in retirement. All, however, I wish to prevail with you, is only to intermit, not to renounce, the charms of solitude. If I were to invite you to a feast, as I would blend dishes of a poignant taste with those of the luscious kind, in order to sharpen the edge of your palate by the one, which had been flattened by the other; so I now advise you to enliven, sometimes, the smooth pleasures of life, with those of a more active nature. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO PONTIUS.

You have read, it seems, my poems, and are desirous to know how it happened that a man of my gravity (as you are pleased to call me, though, in truth, I am only not a trifler), could adopt this mode of composition. To take the account, then, a good way back, I must acquaint you, that I had always an inclination to poetry, insomuch that, when I was fourteen years of age, I composed a tragedy in Greek. If you should ask me what sort of one? I protest I do not know; all that I remember of it is,

that it was called a tragedy. Some time afterwards, in my return from the army, being detained in the island of Icaria† by contrary winds, I vented my spleen against that place in some Latin elegies. I have since made some attempts in the heroic kind; but these *hendecasyllables*‡ are the first I ever composed in that measure, and the following accident gave birth to them. The treatise of Asinius Gallus was read to me one day at Laurentinum, wherein he draws a comparison between his father and Cicero, and cites an epigram of Tully's on his favourite Tiro. Upon retiring to take my afternoon's nap (for it was summer), and not being able to sleep, I began to reflect, that the greatest orators have been fond of poetry, and valued themselves upon it. I tried, therefore, what I could do in this way; and, though I had long disused myself to compositions of this nature, I struck out, in a much shorter time than I could have imagined, the following lines upon the subject which gave me the first hint:

When Gallus I read, who pretends that his sire
Had far more than Tully poetical fire;

† An island in the Archipelago, now called Nicaria.

‡ See Book IV. Let. 14. note.

The wisest of men, I perceived, held it fit
To temper his wisdom with love and with wit;
For Tully, grave Tully, in amorous strains,
Of the frauds of his paramour Tiro complains;
That, faithless to love, and to pleasure untrue,
From his promised embrace the arch wanton withdrew.
Then I said to my heart,—why shouldst thou conceal
The sweetest of passions, the love which you feel?—
Yes, fly, wanton Muse, and proclaim it around,
Thy Pliny has loved, and his Tiro has found;
The coy one so artful, who sweetly denies,
And from the soft flame, but to heighten it, flies.

From this I turned to elegy, which flowed from me with the same ease; and being thus drawn in by the facility with which the muses yielded to my addresses, I proceeded to increase the number of my productions of this kind. At my return to Rome, I showed my performances to some of my friends, who were pleased to approve of them. Afterwards, whenever I had leisure, and particularly when I travelled, I made several other attempts in the poetical way. At length I determined, after the example of many others, to publish a separate volume of these poems; and I have no reason to repent of my resolution. They are much enquired after, and are in every body's hands; they have even tempted the Greeks to learn our language, who sing them to their harps and lyres. But will you not imagine

I begin to rave? Remember, however, poets have that privilege. The truth is, I am not giving you my own judgment, but that of others, which, be it right or wrong, I am much pleased with; and have only to wish, that posterity may be of the same opinion. Farewell,

LETTER V.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

It is incredible how impatiently I wish for your return;—such is the tenderness of my affection for you, and so unaccustomed am I to a separation! I lie awake the greatest part of the night in thinking of you, and (to use a very common, but very true expression) my feet carry me, of their own accord, to your apartment, at those hours I used to visit you; but not finding you there, I return with as much sorrow and disappointment as an excluded lover. The only intermission my anxiety knows, is when I am engaged at the bar, and in the causes of my friends. Judge, then, how wretched must *his* life be, who finds no repose but in business; no consolation but in a crowd. Farewell.

* His wife.

LETTER VI

TO MACRINUS.

A VERY singular and remarkable circumstance has happened in the affair of Varenus,† the consequence of which is yet in suspense. The Bithynians, it is said, (for I only mention it as report,) have dropped their prosecution of him, being, it seems, convinced, at last, that the accusation was extremely ill-founded. A deputy from that province is arrived, who has brought with him a decree of their assembly; copies of which he has delivered to Cæsar, and to several of the principal persons in Rome, as also to us, the advocates for Varenus. Magius,‡ nevertheless, whom I mentioned in my last letter, persists in his charge; to support which, he is incessantly teasing the worthy Nigrinus. This excellent person was counsel for him in his former petition to the consuls, that Varenus might be compelled to produce his accounts. Upon that occasion, as I attended Varenus merely as a friend, I determined to be silent. I thought it highly imprudent for me, who was appointed his counsel by the senate, to attempt to defend him as a person accused, when

† See Book V. Let. 20.

‡ One of the Bithynians employed to manage the trial.

it was his business to insist that there was actually no charge subsisting against him. Accordingly, when Nigrinus had finished his speech, the consuls turning their eyes upon me, I rose up, and said, "When they should hear what the real deputies from the province had to object against the motion of Nigrinus, they would be sensible that my silence was not without sufficient reason." Upon this Nigrinus asked me to whom these deputies were sent? I replied, "That the decree of the province was directed to me, among others." He returned, "That is a point, though it may be clear to you, I am not so well satisfied of." To this I rejoined, "Though it may not be so evident to you, who are concerned to support the accusation, it may be perfectly clear to me, who am on the more favourable side." Then Polyænus, the deputy from the province, acquainted the senate with the reasons for superseding the prosecution, but desired it might be without prejudice to Cæsar's determination. Magius answered him; Polyænus replied; as for myself, I only now and then threw in a word, observing in general a profound silence. For I have learned, by experience, that, upon some occasions, there is as much rhetoric in silence, as in all the pomp of the most studied eloquence; and I remember, in some criminal cases, to have done even more service to my clients by a judicious ta-

citurnity, than I could have expected from the most artful speech. To enter into the subject of eloquence, is indeed very foreign to the intent of my present letter, yet allow me to give you one instance in proof of the observation I just mentioned. A certain lady having lost her son, suspected that his freedmen, whom he had appointed co-heirs with her, were guilty of forging the will, and poisoning him. Accordingly, she charged them with the fact before the emperor, who directed Julianus Servianus to try the cause. I was counsel for the defendants, and the case being exceedingly remarkable, and the advocates concerned on both sides of high reputation, it drew together a very numerous audience. The event was, the servants being put to the torture, my clients were acquitted. But the mother applied a second time to the emperor, pretending she had discovered some new evidence. Servianus was therefore directed to rehear the cause, that she might produce her fresh proofs. Julius Africanus was counsel for the mother, a young man of good parts, but little experience. He is grandson to the famous orator of that name, of whom it is reported, that Passienus Crispus, hearing him one day plead, archly said, "All this, I own, is very fine; but what is it to the purpose?" Julius Africanus, I say, having made a long harangue, and exhausted the portion of time allotted to him, en-

treated Servianus to allow him to add one word more. When he had concluded, and the eyes of the whole assembly had been fixed a considerable time upon me, "I would have answered Africanus," I said, "if he had given us that *one word* he begged leave to add, in which I doubt not he would have told us something we had not heard before." I do not remember to have gained so much applause by any speech I ever made, as I did in this instance by making none. Thus the little that I said for Varenus was received with the same general approbation. The consuls, agreeably to the request of Polyænus, reserved the whole affair for the determination of the emperor; whose resolution I impatiently wait for, as that will decide, whether I may be entirely at my ease with respect to Varenus, or must again renew all my trouble and solicitude upon his account. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO SATURNINUS.

THOUGH I had very lately made my acknowledgements to our friend Priscus, yet, since it was your desire, I willingly repeated them. It is with great pleasure I see so much harmony subsist between two such worthy men, whom I tenderly esteem, and that you consider each other's amity as a mu-

tual obligation. For he professes also on his part to receive much happiness from yours, and, with a very generous contention, endeavours to rival you in that reciprocal affection which time, I am persuaded, will augment.

I regret that any business should call you off from your studies; however, as soon as you shall have compromised (which you say you are upon the point of effecting) one of the causes you mention, and brought the other to a hearing, you will be at leisure to enjoy the retirement of the country; and, when you are satiated with repose, we may hope to see you in Rome. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO PRISCUS.

THE frequent letters which I receive from Saturninus, expressing his sense of your favours to him, afford me inexpressible satisfaction. May you go on as you began, and continue to cherish an affection for so worthy a man, from whose friendship you will receive a most sensible and lasting gratification. For as he is greatly distinguished by every other virtue, so particularly, by his invariable attachment to his friends. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO TUSCUS.

You desire my sentiments concerning the method of study you should pursue, in that retirement to which you have long since withdrawn. In the first place, then, I look upon it as a very advantageous practice (and it is what many recommend) to translate either from Greek into Latin, or from Latin into Greek. By this means you will furnish yourself not only with proper but brilliant expressions, with a variety of beautiful figures; and, in short, acquire a nervous and powerful style. Besides, by imitating the most approved authors, you will find your imagination insensibly catch their flame, and kindle into a similar warmth of invention; at the same time, that those passages which you may possibly have overlooked in a common way of reading, cannot escape you in translating; and this method will also enlarge your knowledge, and improve your judgment. After you have read an eminent author, it may be proper, in order to make yourself more perfectly master of his subject and argument, to turn, from being his reader, to be his rival, as it were, and attempt something of your own upon the same topic; and then make an impartial comparison between your performance and

his, in order to observe in what points either you or he have most happily succeeded. It will be a matter of very pleasing congratulation to yourself, if you should find, in some articles, that you have the advantage of him, as it will be a great mortification if he should rise above you in all. You may sometimes venture, in these little experimental essays, to try your strength upon the most shining passages of a distinguished author. The attempt, indeed, will be somewhat bold; but as it is a contention which passes in secret, it cannot be taxed with presumption. Not but that we have seen instances of persons, who have publicly entered this sort of lists with great success; and while they did not despair of overtaking, have gloriously advanced before those whom they would have thought it sufficient honour to follow. After you have thus finished a composition, you may lay it aside, till it is no longer fresh in your memory, and then take it up, in order to revise and correct it. You will find several things to retain, but still more to reject; you will add a new thought here, and alter another there. It is a laborious and tedious task, I own, thus to re-enflame the mind after its first ardour has subsided; to recover an impulse when its force has been checked and spent: in a word, to interweave new parts into the texture of a compo-

sition, without disturbing or confounding the original plan; but the advantage attending this method will overbalance the difficulty. I know your present attention is principally directed towards the eloquence of the bar; but I would not for that reason advise you never to quit the polemic, if I may so call it, and contentious style. As land is improved by sowing it with various seeds, so is the mind by exercising it with different studies. I would recommend it to you, therefore, sometimes to single out a fine passage of history; and sometimes to exercise yourself in the epistolary style. For it frequently happens, that, in pleading, one has occasion to introduce historical, and even poetical descriptions; as by studying the epistolary manner of writing, you will acquire a concise and easy expression. It will be extremely advantageous also to unbend your mind by poetical compositions: when I say so, I do not mean that species of poetry which turns upon subjects of great length, (*such* being suitable only for persons of much leisure,) but those little pieces of the sprightly kind of poesy, which serve as proper reliefs to, and are consistent with employments of every sort. They commonly go under the title of *poetical amusements*; but these amusements have sometimes gained as much reputation to their authors, as works of a

ore serious nature; and thus (for while I am ex-
orting you to poetry, why should I not turn poet
yself?)

As yielding wax the artist's skill commands,
Submissive shaped beneath his forming hands;
Now dreadful stands in arms a Mars confest;
Or now with Venus' softer air imprest;
A wanton Cupid now the mould belies;
Now shines, severely chaste, a Pallas wise:
As not alone to quench the raging flame,
The sacred fountain pours her friendly stream;
But sweetly gliding through the flowery green,
Spreads glad refreshment o'er the smiling scene;
So, formed by science, should the ductile mind
Receive, distinct, each various art refined.

In this manner the greatest men, as well as the
most eminent orators, were accustomed either to
exercise or amuse themselves, or rather, indeed,
both. It is surprising how much the mind is en-
tertained and refreshed by these little poetical com-
positions, as they turn upon subjects of gallantry,
satire, tenderness, manners, and every thing, in
short, that concerns life and the affairs of the world.
Besides, the same advantage attends the exercising
our minds in this inferior species of poesy, as in
every other sort; we turn from them to the easier
composition of prose with so much the more plea-

sure, after having experienced the difficulty of being constrained and fettered by numbers.

And now, perhaps, I have enlarged upon the question you proposed to me more than you desired; nevertheless, there is still one article which I have omitted: I have not told you what kind of authors you should read; though, indeed, that was sufficiently implied, when I mentioned the subjects I would recommend for your compositions. You will remember, that the most approved writers of each sort are to be carefully selected; for, as it has been well observed, "though we should read much, we should not read many books." * Who

* Thus the noble and polite moralist, speaking of the influence which our reading has upon our *taste* and *manners*, thinks it improper "to call a man *well-read*, who reads many authors; since he must, of necessity, have more ill models than good; and be more stuffed with bombast, ill fancy, and wry thought, than filled with solid sense and just imagination."—*Charact.* vol. i. 142. When the Goths over-ran Greece, the libraries escaped their destruction, by a notion which some of their leaders industriously propagated among them, that it would be more for their interest to leave those spoils untouched to their enemies; as being proper to enervate their minds, and amuse them with vain and idle speculations. Truth, perhaps, has been less a gainer by this multiplicity of books, than error; and it may be a question, whether the excellent models which have been delivered down to us from antiquity, together with those few which

those authors are, is so clearly settled, and so generally known, that I need not particularly name them; besides, I have already extended this letter to such an immoderate length, that I fear I have too long interrupted those studies, the method of which I have been pointing out to you. I will here resign you, therefore, to your tablets, either to resume the studies in which you were before engaged, or to enter upon some of those I have recommended. Farewell.

modern times have produced, by any means balance the immoderate weight which must be thrown into the opposite scale of writers. The truth is, though we may be learned by other men's reflections, wise we can only be by our own; and the maxim here recommended by Pliny, would well deserve the attention of the studious, though no other inconvenience attended the reading of many books, than that which Sir William Temple apprehends from it,—the lessening the force and growth of a man's own genius. For it may be justly doubted, with that ingenious author, "whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own, or hinder the motion or agitation of them, from which all invention arises; as heaping on wood, or too many sticks, or too close together, suppresses, and sometimes quite extinguishes, a little spark, that would otherwise have grown up to a noble flame."—*Essay on Learning*, vol. i. 158. fol. edit.

LETTER X.

TO MACRINUS.

As I always desire to know the end of an interesting story when it broke off before the conclusion, so I imagine you will be glad to be informed of the remaining part of the cause, which I mentioned to you,* between the Bithynians and Varenus. It was pleaded before the emperor by Polyænus on one side, and Magius on the other. When Cæsar had heard both parties, "Neither party," said he, "shall have reason to complain of delay, for I will take care to inform myself of the real sentiments of the province." In the mean while, Varenus has gained a very considerable point; for can any circumstance make the justness of his accusation appear more doubtful, than that it is a question whether he is accused at all? We have only to wish, that the province may not again approve of the measure which, it is said, she now condemns, and repent of her former repentance. Farewell.

* See Letter VI. of this Book.

LETTER XI.

TO FABATUS.*

You are surprised, I find, that my share of five-twelfths of the estate which lately fell to me, and which I had directed to be sold to the best bidder, should have been disposed of by my freedman Hermes to Corellia, (without putting it up to auction) at the rate of seven hundred thousand sesterces † for the whole. You think it might have produced nine hundred thousand, ‡ and are so much the more desirous to know, whether I am inclined to ratify what he has done. I am; and for such reasons, I hope, as not only you will approve, but which will also excuse me to my joint-coheirs, for having, upon a motive of superior obligation, separated my interest from theirs. I have the highest esteem for Corellia, both as the sister of Rufus, whose memory will ever be sacred to me, and as she was an intimate friend of my mother. Besides, that excellent man Minutius Tuscus, her husband, has every claim to my affection that a long friendship can give him; as there was likewise so strict an inti-

* His wife's grandfather.

† About L. 5600 of our money.

‡ About L. 7200 of our money.

macy between her son and me, that I fixed upon him to preside at the games which I exhibited when I was elected prætor. This lady, when I was last in the country, expressed a strong inclination to purchase some spot upon our lake of Comum; I therefore made her an offer, at her own price, of any quantity of my land there, except what came to me from my father and mother; for I could not consent to sell any part of my patrimonial estate, even to Corellia. When the inheritance in question fell to me, I wrote to acquaint her it was to be sold. This letter I sent by Hermes; who, upon her requesting him immediately to assign to her my proportion, consented. You see, therefore, how strongly my honour is engaged, to confirm an act which my freedman did, in pursuance of what he knew to be my inclinations. I have only to entreat my fellow-coheirs, not to be offended, that I have made a separate sale of what I had certainly a right to dispose of. They are under no necessity of being governed by my example, since they have not the same connections with Corellia; and are at full liberty, therefore, to be guided by interest, which, in my own case, I chose to sacrifice to friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO MINUTIUS.

I HAVE delayed so much the longer sending you the petition, which I have drawn up for the use of your, or rather I should say *our*, friend, (for what is there we do not possess in common?) that you might not have time to correct it; that is, to render all the pains I have taken ineffectual. After all, whether you may or may not find time for that purpose, I know not; but of this I am sure, you will most certainly spoil it, if, agreeably to the very *delicate* taste of you very *refined* critics, you should throw out its most shining parts. I shall forgive you, however, if you should; and shall, upon some future occasion, successfully make use of what your fastidious niceness rejects: as, in some future composition, I doubt not to receive much applause, for those different expressions which I have interlined. I suspected you would call every thing unnatural and bombast which is raised above the style of ordinary language; I have thought proper, therefore, for your ease, to vary the phrase, and take it somewhat lower, or rather, indeed, to debase it; though you, I know, (for I must continue to rally your *nice* taste,) will esteem it an improvement. Thus far, in order to make you smile in the

midst of your serious occupations, I have indulged a jocose humour; but, without doubt, I am wonderful serious when I add, that I expect to be reimbursed my charges in sending a courier express with this petition. Now are you not disposed to condemn it, not only in some of its parts, but in the whole, and insist, that you ought not to pay for a thing which is absolutely of no value? Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO FEROX.

I FIND, by your letter, that you do, and do not, study. This will appear a little enigmatical, till I explain it: You expressly say, indeed, that you have bidden adieu to study; but such a vein of elegance runs through your whole letter, that it is impossible it should have been composed without much thought; unless you are privileged beyond the rest of mankind, and can express such admirable sentiments, in so polished a style, carelessly, and with a flowing pen. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO CORELLIA.

You are truly generous, to desire and insist, that I take for my share of the estate you purchased of

me, not after the rate of seven hundred thousand sesterces* for the whole, as my freedman sold it to you, but in the proportion of nine hundred thousand, agreeable to what you gave to the farmers of the twentieths† for their part. But I must desire and insist, in my turn, that you consider not only what is suitable to your character, but what is worthy of mine; and that you suffer me to oppose your inclination in this single instance, with the same warmth that I obey it in all others. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO SATURNINUS.

You ask me, *how I spend my time?* You know how much of it is disposed in the business of my post; what remains, I devote to the service of my friends, and sometimes to my books; and although I will not venture to affirm it would be better, I am

* See Letter XI. of this Book.

† Augustus imposed a tax of the twentieth part of all legacies and inheritances, which he appropriated to the support of the army. This was deemed a heavy imposition; and accordingly it was eased, in several points, by succeeding emperors, particularly by Trajan, as appears from our author's noble panegyric upon him, (*Sect. 37. &c.*); but it was not wholly abolished till the time of Antoninus Pius.

sure it would be happier, if I could say, that the latter not only *sometimes*, but constantly engages me. I should be concerned to hear, that your occupations are of the sort least agreeable to your inclinations, if I did not know, that to be active in the affairs of one's native corporation, and in settling controversies among one's friends there, are employments of the most laudable kind.

I was well persuaded the company of our friend Priscus would be extremely agreeable to you, sensible as I am of the amiable simplicity and politeness of his manners; but I had yet to learn, (what I had the pleasure to be informed by your letter,) that he is also the most grateful of men, by so kindly remembering the little services I have done him. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO FABATUS.

CALESTRIUS TIRO, to whom I am united by every public and private connection, is in the number of my most intimate friends. We served together in the army, and were both of us quæstors† at the same time to Cæsar. He got the start of me, indeed, in the tribunate, by the privilege which the

† An office resembling that of our secretary of state.

law gives to those who have children; † but I overlooked him in the prætorship, by the indulgence of the emperor, who dispensed with my wanting a year of the legal age for that office. I frequently retire with him to his country villas, and he often takes the benefit of change of air at mine. He is lately appointed proconsul of Bœtica, and proposes to pass through Ticinum, ‡ in his way to that province. I hope, and indeed am well assured, I can easily prevail with him to turn out of his road to your house, if you should have an inclination to make any of those slaves free before a magistrate, to whom you have already given their liberty § in

† A law at first proposed by Augustus, but which afterwards, with several alterations, passed in the consulship of Papius and Poppeas, A. U. 762; in which, amongst other things, it was enacted, "That all magistrates should take precedence according to the number of their children; that, in elections, those candidates should be preferred who had the most numerous offspring; and, that any person might stand sooner than ordinary for an office, if he had as many children as he wanted years to be legally capable of such a dignity."—Vid. *Lipsii Excurs. ad Tacit.* an. 1. 3.

‡ Pavia, in the duchy of Milan.

§ This last method only discharged them from servitude, but did not entitle them to the privileges of complete freedom.

the presence of your friends. You need be under no apprehension that he will look upon this as a trouble, as I am sure he would willingly travel round the world for my sake. I beg you, therefore, to lay aside all scruple, and only consider what will be most agreeable to yourself; for, be assured, he will take as much pleasure in executing my requests, as I do in obeying yours. Farewell. :

LETTER XVII.

TO CELER.

EVERY author has his particular reasons for reciting his works; mine, I have often said, is in order, if any error should have escaped my own observation, (as no doubt is probable,) to have it pointed out to me. I cannot therefore but be surprised to find, (what your letter assures me,) that there are some who blame me for reciting my speeches; unless, perhaps, they are of opinion, that this is the single species of composition which ought to be privileged from correction. If so, I would willingly ask them, why they allow, (if perchance they vouchsafe to allow,) that history may be recited, since it is a work which ought to be devoted to truth, not ostentation? or why tragedy, as it is composed for action and the stage, not for being read to a private audience? or lyric poetry, as it is

not a reader, but a chorus of voices and instruments that it requires? They will reply, perhaps, that, in the instances mentioned, custom has made the practice in question usual: I should be glad to know, then, if they think the person who first introduced this practice is to be condemned? Besides, the rehearsal of orations is no unprecedented thing, either with us or the Grecians. Still, perhaps, they will insist, that it can answer no purpose to recite a speech, which has previously been delivered in public. There would be some force in this objection, if one were immediately to repeat the very same performance, and to the very same audience; but if you make several additions and alterations, if your audience is composed partly of the same, and partly of different persons, and the recital is at some distance of time, why is there less propriety in rehearsing your speech than in publishing it? "But it is difficult," say the objectors, "to give satisfaction to an audience by the mere reading of a speech;" *that* is a reason which concerns the particular skill and pains of the person who rehearses, but by no means holds against recitation in general. In fact, it is not while I am reading, but when I am read, that I aim at approbation; and upon this principle it is, that I omit no sort of method which may render my performances more correct. Accordingly, I again and again revise my

compositions in private; afterwards read them to two or three friends; and then give them to a few others to make their remarks. If I have still any doubt concerning the justness of their observations, I carefully reconsider them with another friend or two; and then finally recite them to a more numerous assembly. This is the time, believe me, when I find myself best qualified to exercise all the severity of criticism; for my attention rises in proportion to my solicitude; as nothing renders the judgement so acute to discern errors, as that modest respect and reverence one feels for one's audience upon those occasions. For tell me, whether you would not be infinitely less affected, if you were to speak before a single person only, though ever so learned, than before a numerous assembly, even though it were composed of none but illiterate people? When you rise up to plead, are you not at that juncture, above all others, most diffident of your powers? and do you not wish, I will not say some particular parts only, but that the whole frame of your intended speech were altered, especially if the circle should be large in which you are to speak? for there is something in a crowded audience, even of the most vulgar kind, that strikes one with awe. And if you suspect, at the first opening of your speech, that you are not well received, do you not find all the energy of your mind weakened, and

the whole strength of your abilities sink under you ? The reason I imagine to be, that there is I know not what dignity in the collective sentiments of a multitude ; and though, separately, their judgment is, perhaps, of little weight, yet, when united, it becomes respectable. Agreeably to this notion, Pomponius Secundus, the famous tragic poet, whenever his friends and he differed about the retaining or rejecting any passage in his dramatic writings, used to say, " I appeal to the people ! " † and, accordingly, by their silence or applause, adopted either his own or his friends' sentiments ; such was the regard he paid to the populace ! ‡ Whether with justice

† There is a kind of witticism in this expression, which will be lost to the mere English reader, unless he be informed, that the Romans had a privilege, confirmed to them by several laws which passed in the earlier ages of the republic, of appealing from the decisions of the magistrates to the general assembly of the people ; and the form of appeal was in the same words which Pomponius here applies to a different purpose.

‡ However unsafe, in general, an appeal to the vulgar notions may be, there are yet some cases in which their sentiments have ever been received by the judicious, as decisive. The merit of performances in the persuasive, or imitative arts, so far as the mere raising or representing the passions are concerned, will best be tried by the effect they produce on plain and untutored minds ; for, as Tully observes, " That artist, who has nature for his object, must certainly fall

or not, does not concern me to determine, as I never recite my works publicly, but only before a select number of friends, whose presence I respect, and whose judgment I value; in a word, whose opinions I observe as if they were so many individuals I had

“ short of the truth of his art, where nature is not moved.” *De Orat.* lib. 1. The custom which prevailed among the Romans, of reciting their works of genius in the porticoes and places of public resort, took its rise probably from the same notion of a general and innate taste being implanted in all mankind of what is just and natural in the moving arts. It was upon this principle, likewise, that the great masters in painting and statuary, in ancient Greece, exhibited their performances to public view, and corrected them by the popular feelings. There is a remarkable story of Annibal Carrachi, which shows he appealed to the same standard. He observed, that a famous picture of Domenichino's, representing the flagellation of St Andrew, made a very strong impression upon an old woman, who, at the same time, seemed little affected with another picture of a martyrdom, done by Guido, which was placed near it. A debate afterwards happening about the respective merit of these two performances, Carrachi decided the dispute by only relating this fact. † Thus, as the poet observes,

———The people's voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God. POPE.

† The well known appeal of Moliere to his old house-keeper, cannot but occur to the reader as a remarkable instance of the same kind.

separately consulted, at the same time that I stand in as much awe before them, as I should before the most numerous assembly. What Cicero says of the pen, will, in my opinion, hold equally true of that dread we have of the public : " It is the most " rigid critic imaginable."† The very fear of reciting, of entering an assembly, and the reverential concern when one appears there ; each of these circumstances being impressed upon the composer's mind, tend to improve and perfect his performance. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot repent of a practice which I have experienced to be so exceedingly beneficial ; and far from being discouraged by the trifling objections of these censors, I request you to point out to me if there be any other method of correction, that I may also adopt it ; for nothing can sufficiently satisfy my anxiety to render my compositions perfect. I reflect what an arduous adventure it is to resign any work into the hands of the public ; and I cannot but be persuaded, that frequent revisals, and many consultations, must go to the finishing of a performance, which one desires should universally and for ever please. Farewell.

† "*Stilus est optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector atque magister.*"—De Orat. lib. 33.

LETTER XVIII.

TO CANINIUS.

You ask my advice in what manner you shall settle the sum of money which you have presented to our fellow-citizens of Comum for an annual festival, so as to secure the just application of it after your death. Your question proceeds from a truly generous principle, but the answer is not very easy. If you pay down the money to the community, there is great danger that it will be squandered away. If you settle lands for that purpose, they will probably be ill cultivated, as those of the public usually are. Upon the whole, then, I can think of no method more eligible than what I pursued myself in a parallel instance. Intending to give 500,000 sesterces † for the maintenance of children who were born of good families, I made a fictitious sale to the public agent of an estate in land which was worth considerably more, who reconveyed it back to me, charged with a yearly rent of 30,000 sesterces. ‡ By these means the principal was se-

† About L. 4000 of our money.

‡ About L. 240 of our money. It should seem, by this passage, that the rate of interest of money upon mortgage among the Romans in Pliny's time, or rather at the time

cured to the community, at the same time that the interest was certain, and the estate itself (as it was of much greater value than the rent charged upon it) was always sure of finding a tenant. I am well aware, indeed, that, by this method, I have actually given more than I appear to have done, as the value of the whole estate will be much lessened by the incumbrance with which it is charged. But the interest of the public ought always to supersede every private consideration, as what is eternal is to be preferred to what is mortal; and a man of true generosity will study in what manner to render his benefaction most advantageous, rather than how he may bestow it with least expence. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO PRISCUS.

I AM deeply afflicted by the ill state of health of my friend Fannia, which she contracted during her attendance on Junia, one of the vestal virgins. She engaged in this good office at first voluntarily,

when he wrote this letter, (for no doubt it varied with public circumstances,) was at six per cent. ; as, in the common way of loan upon personal security, it appears, from the sixty-second letter of the tenth book, to have been so high as twelve per cent.

Junia being her relation; but was afterwards appointed to it by an order from the college of priests: for these virgins, when any indisposition makes it necessary to remove them from the temple of Vesta, are always delivered into the care and custody of some venerable matron. It was her assiduity in the execution of this charge that occasioned her present disorder, which is a continual fever, attended with a cough, that increases daily. She is extremely emaciated, and every part of her frame seems in a total decay, except her spirits; those, indeed, she preserves in their full vigour; and with a fortitude worthy the wife of Helvidius, and the daughter of Thrasea. In every other article her health is so greatly impaired, that I am more than apprehensive upon her account; I am deeply afflicted. I grieve, my friend, that so excellent a woman is going to be removed from the world, which will never, perhaps, again behold her equal. How eminent is her chastity, her piety, her gravity, her courage! She twice followed her husband into exile, and once was banished upon his account. For Senecio, when he was arraigned for writing the life of Helvidius, having said, in his defence, that he composed that work at the request of Fannia; Metius Carus, with a stern and threatening air, asked her whether it was true? She acknowledged it was: and when he farther questioned her, whe-

ther she supplied him likewise with materials for that purpose, and whether her mother was privy to this transaction? she boldly confessed the former, but absolutely denied the latter. In short, throughout her whole examination, not a word escaped her which betrayed the least timidity. On the contrary, she had the courage to preserve a copy of those very books, which the senate, overawed by the tyranny of the times, had ordered to be suppressed, and the effects of the author to be confiscated; taking with her, as her companions, those obnoxious volumes, which had been the cause of her exile. How pleasing is her conversation; how polite her address; and (which seldom unites in the same character) how venerable her whole demeanour! She will hereafter, I am well persuaded, be pointed out as a model to all wives, and perhaps be deemed worthy to be held forth as an example of fortitude even to our sex. I am sure, at least, that we, who have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with her, contemplate her with the same admiration as those female heroines, who are celebrated in ancient story. I confess, I cannot but tremble for this illustrious house, as it seems shaken to its very foundation, and falling into ruins with this excellent woman; for, though she will leave descendants behind her, yet what a height of virtue must they attain, what glorious actions must

they perform, ere the world will be persuaded, that she was not the last of her family ! It is an aggravating circumstance of affliction to me, that, by her death, I seem to lose a second time her mother ; that worthy mother (and what can I say higher in her praise) of so amiable a woman ! who, as she was restored to me in her daughter, so she will now again be taken from me, and the loss of Fannia will thus pierce my heart at once with a fresh stab, and tear open a former wound. I so truly loved and honoured them both, that I know not which had the greatest share of my affection and esteem ; and it was a question they wished might ever remain undetermined. In their prosperity and their adversity I performed every good office to them in my power, and was their comfort in exile, as well as their avenger at their return. But I have not yet discharged all the obligations I owe them, and am so much the more solicitous for the recovery of this lady, that I may have time to acquit the full claim she has upon my kindest offices. Such is the anxiety under which I write this letter ! But if some friendly power should happily give me occasion to exchange it for sentiments of joy, I shall not complain of the alarms I now suffer. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO TACITUS.

I HAVE perused your book with all the attention I was master of, and have marked the passages I think should be altered, and those which I am of opinion ought entirely to be thrown out. It is as habitual to me to speak truth, as it is agreeable to you to hear it; and indeed none are more patient of censure, than those who have the best claim to applause. I now expect, in return, your observations upon that treatise of mine which I lately sent you. How agreeable, how noble, is such a commerce! and how am I pleased with the thought, that posterity, if it shall at all concern itself with us, will not cease to mention, with what harmony, what freedom, what fidelity, we lived together! It will be an instance as remarkable as it is uncommon, that two persons, nearly of the same age and rank, and of some character in the republic of letters, (for, since I join myself with you, I am obliged to speak of your merit with reserve,) should thus mutually assist and promote each other's studies. When I was a very young man, and you in the prime of your glory and reputation, I endeavoured to follow your steps, and was desirous to be considered as next in fame to you;

But next, with many a length between ! *

And though there were, at that time, many celebrated geniuses in Rome, yet you, of all others, appeared to me, not only most worthy to be my model, but, from a similitude of our dispositions, most easy for me to copy. It is particularly agreeable to me therefore to find, that, in all companies where literature is the topic of conversation, we are always mentioned together, and that my name immediately follows yours. It is true, there are some who prefer you to me, as others, on the contrary, give me the advantage; but I am little solicitous in what order we are placed, so that we stand together; for, in my estimation, whoever is next to you must necessarily precede every one else. You even see, in wills † (unless in the case of

* Virg. *Æn.* Pitt's Transl.

† " It was the peculiar custom of Rome, for the clients
" and dependents of families, to bequeath, at their death,
" to their patrons, some considerable part of their estates,
" as the most effectual testimony of their respect and gratitude ; and the more a man received in this way, the more
" it redounded to his credit. Thus Cicero mentions it to
" the honour of Lucullus, that, while he governed Asia as
" proconsul, many great estates were left him by will. And
" Nepos tells us, in praise of Atticus, that he succeeded to
" many inheritances of the same kind, bequeathed to him on

particular friendship to either of us) we are always equally considered, and that the legacies bequeathed to us are generally the same, both in number and value. Since, therefore, we are thus united by a similitude of studies, manners, reputation, and even by testamentary donations, those last instances of the world's good opinion; should not these circumstances tend to enflame us mutually with the most ardent affection? Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO CORNUTUS.

I OBEY, my dearest colleague, your commands to favour the weakness of my eyes; and accordingly I came hither in a covered litter, in which I was as much sheltered as if I had been in my chamber. I forbear too (with reluctance indeed, however I do forbear) both writing and reading; and it is with my ears only that I study. By drawing the curtains of my chamber, I make it gloomy, but not dark; and when I walk in my

“no other account than of his friendly and amiable temper.
“Cicero, when he was falsely reproached by Antony, with
“being neglected on these occasions, declared, in his reply,
“that he had gained, from this single article, about two
“hundred thousand pounds.”—*Middleton's Life of Tully*,
Vol. II. 514.

covered portico, I shut the lower range of windows, and by that means enjoy as much shade as light. Thus I endeavour to accustom myself to the light by degrees. The bath being of service in this case, I allow myself the use of it, as also of wine, because it is not judged prejudicial, but I drink it with great moderation. I do so, you know, at all times, but particularly now that I have one ‡ who narrowly observes me. I received the pullet with great pleasure, as coming from you; and weak as my eyes still are, they are strong enough, however, to discern it is extremely fat. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO FALCO.

You will not wonder I so earnestly pressed you to confer the tribunate upon my friend, when you shall be informed, who and what he is; and as you have complied with my request, I may now acquaint you with his name and character. It is Cornelius Minutianus, who, both in rank and merit, is the ornament of that province to which I owe my birth. His family and fortune are noble, and yet he cultivates science with as much application, as if the narrowness of his circumstances rendered

‡ Meaning his wife, perhaps, or his physician.



it necessary. He is a most upright judge, a most strenuous advocate, a most faithful friend. You will look upon the obligation as done to yourself, when you shall have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with this excellent person, who (not to speak in too lofty terms of so modest a man) is equal to all the honours and titles that can be conferred upon him. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO FABATUS. *

I GREATLY rejoice, that you have so much recovered your strength, as to be able to take so long a journey as to Mediolanum, † in order to meet Tiro; but, that you may continue to enjoy that happiness, let me entreat you to spare yourself a fatigue so improper for a man of your years. I must even insist, that you wait for him at Comum, and that you do not stir out of your own house, nor even out of your chamber, to receive him. As I love him with the affection of a brother, it would be unreasonable he should expect from the person whom I honour as my parent, a point of ceremony which he would spare his own. Farewell.

* His wife's grandfather.

† Milan.

LETTER XXIV.

TO GEMINIUS.

NUMIDIA QUADRATILLA is lately dead, having lived almost to her eightieth year. She enjoyed, till her last sickness, an uninterrupted state of health, with a strength and firmness of body unusual to persons of her sex. She has left a very prudent will, having disposed of two-thirds of her estate to her grandson, and the rest to her granddaughter. With the young lady I have little acquaintance, but the grandson is one of the most favourite and intimate friends I have. He is a person of singular worth; and his merit entitles him to the affection of a relation, even where his blood does not. Though he is extremely beautiful, he escaped every malicious imputation, both whilst a boy and when a youth: he was a husband at four-and-twenty, and would have been a father, if Providence had not disappointed his hopes. Notwithstanding he resided in the family with his grandmother, who was exceedingly devoted to the pleasures of the town, yet he observed great severity of conduct himself, at the same time that he behaved to her with the utmost respect. She re-

tained a set of pantomimes, * and was an encourager of this sort of people, to a degree inconsistent with a person of her sex and rank. But Quadratus never appeared at these entertainments, not only when she exhibited them in the theatre, but even in her own house; nor indeed did she require him to be present. I once heard her say, when she was recommending the studies of her grandson to my inspection, that it was her custom, in order to pass away some of those unemployed hours with which female life abounds, to amuse herself with playing at chess, † or seeing the mi-

* These pantomimes were, as their name imports, universal mimics, whose humour consisted in imitating the peculiar manner and gesture of particular persons. They were at first introduced upon the stage, as Scaliger supposes, to succeed the chorus and comedies, and divert the audience with buffoon postures and antic dances. In after times, those interludes became distinct entertainments, and were exhibited apart from other plays. But the use of these pantomimes was not confined to the stage only, for Suetonius informs us, they were introduced in funeral solemnities, in order to represent the manner of the deceased.

† This game, among the Romans, seems to have been much of the same nature, though, by Quadratilla dismissing her grandson when she played at it, not in the same estimation, as a *female* amusement, with modern chess. Their men, which they called *calculi*, or *latrunculi*, were made sometimes of wax, and sometimes of glass, and were distin-

micry of her pantomimes; but that, whenever she engaged in either of those amusements, she constantly dismissed her grandson to his studies: a dismission which proceeded, I am inclined to think,

guished by black and white colours. The invention of it has been carried by some so high as the siege of Troy; but Peter Texeiras, in his History of Persia, (as quoted by Pictiscus in his *Lex. Antiq. Rom.*) imagines it to be of Persian original; "Because," says he, "in all countries where this game is played, the names of the men are either the same with, or plainly a corruption of, those given to them in the Persian language." Allusions to this game are frequent in the classic writers; but the fullest description of it is contained in the following lines, taken from the little poem addressed to Piso, which is to be found at the end of some editions of Lucan, and is generally ascribed to that author:

*Te si forte juvat, studiorum pondere fessum,
Non languere tamen, lususque movere per artem,
Callidiore modo tabulla variatur aperta
Calculus, et vitreo peraguntur milite bella,
Ut niveus nigras, nunc et niger alliget albos.
Sed tibi quis non terga dedit? quis te duce cessit
Calculus? aut quis non periturus perdidit hostem?
Mille modis acies tua dimicat: ille petentem
Dum fugit, ipse rapit: longo venit ille recessu
Qui stetit in speculis: hic se committere rixæ
Audet, et in prædam venientem decipit hostem
Ancipites subit ille moras, similisque ligato
Obligat ipse duos: hic ad majora movetur,*

as much out of a certain reverential awe she felt upon those occasions in the presence of the youth, as from her affection towards him. I was a good deal surprised, as I believe you will be, at what he

*Ut citus et fracta prorumpat in agmina mandra,
Clausaque dejecto populatur mania vallo.
Interea; sectis quamvis accerima surgunt
Prælia militibus, plena tamen ipse phalange,
Aut etiam paucò spoliata milite vincis,
Et tibi captivæ resonat manus utraq; turbe.*

Ad Pison. Poëmaticon.

When, to relieve the labours of thy mind,
Thou turn'st from deep research in arts refined,
Not in soft indolence you waste the hour,
But happier genius still exerts its power ;
To mimic war the radiant troops are led,
And martial ranks the varied table spread ;
There sable bands, and here a snow-white train,
With doubtful fate of war the fight maintain.
But, who with thee shall dare dispute the field ?
Led by thy hand, what warrior knows to yield ?
Or if he fall, he falls with glorious pride,
His vanquished foe extended by his side.
Unnumbered stratagems thy forces try ;
Now artful feign, and only feign, to fly ;
Now boldly rushes, midst the ranks of war,
The chief, who viewed the slaughtering scene from far.
This bravely daring in the arduous toil,
Repels the host advancing to the spoil ;

told me the last time the pontifical games ‡ were exhibited. As we were coming out of the theatre together, where we had been entertained with her pantomimes, "Do you know," said he, "this is "the first time I ever saw Quadratilla's freedman "dance?" Such was the striking declaration her grandson made! while a set of men, of a far different character, in order to do honour to Quadratilla, (I am ashamed to call it *honour*;) with the lowest and grossest flattery, were running up and down the theatre, affecting the utmost admiration

While cautious *that* moves dreadful on, and slow,
And fraudulent meditates the certain blow.
What though in guise a slave he seems, in chains,
Two captives he in durance close detains:
But see, yon hero, with impetuous haste,
Bursts through the ranks, and lays the ramparts waste!
While thus the mighty battle glows around,
And prostrate chiefs bestrew the well-fought ground,
Full and unbroken, lo! thy squadrons stand,
Or scarce one warrior lost of thy command;
The captive crowds thy victory proclaim,
And foes confess thy undisputed fame.

‡ The priests, as well as other magistrates, exhibited public games to the people when they entered upon their office. It should seem, by what follows, that Quadratilla had lent her troop of pantomimes to honour the celebration of these pontifical games.

and rapture at the performances of these her pantomimes, and then imitating, in musical chant, the *mien and manner* of their lady patroness. But now all that these theatrical flatterers have obtained, in return, is only a few trifling legacies, which they have the mortification to receive from an heir, who never but once deigned to be present at Quadratilla's shows.—I send you this account, as knowing you are not displeased to hear the news of the town, and because, when any occurrence has rejoiced me, I love to renew it again, by communicating it to my friends. And indeed the laudable affection which Quadratilla has shewn in her will to her two heirs, and the particular honour done therein to that excellent youth her grandson, has afforded me a very sensible satisfaction: as I am extremely glad, too, that the house which once belonged to Cassius, the founder and chief of the Cassian * school, is come into the possession of a person not less respectable than its former master. For my worthy friend will fill it as he ought, and its ancient lustre will again revive under Quadratus, who, I am persuaded, will prove as eminent an orator, as Cassius was a lawyer. Farewell.

* A famous lawyer, who flourished in the reign of the emperor Claudius: those who followed his juridical opinions were said to be Cassiani, or of the school of Cassius.

LETTER XXV.

TO RUFUS.

WHAT numbers of learned men does modesty conceal, or love of retirement withdraw, from public fame! and yet, when we are going to speak or recite in numerous assemblies, it is the judgment only of popular and ostentatious talents, of which we stand in awe; whereas we have more reason to revere the decisions of those who cultivate the sciences in contemplative life, and form their opinions of works of genius in privacy and silence; undistracted by the noise of clamorous assemblies; an observation which I give you upon experience. Terentius Junior, having passed through the military offices suitable to a person of equestrian rank, and executed with great integrity the post of receiver-general of the revenues in Narbonensian Gaul, † retired to his estate; preferring the enjoyment of an uninterrupted tranquillity, to those honours which his services had merited. He in-

† One of the four principal divisions of ancient Gaul: it extended from the Pyrenean mountains, which separate France from Spain, to the Alps, which divide it from Italy, and comprehended Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiny, and Savoy.

vited me lately to his house, where, looking upon him only as a worthy master of a family and an industrious farmer, I started such rural topics of conversation, in which I imagined he was most versed. But he soon turned the discourse, and displaying a great fund of knowledge, entered upon subjects of literature. I was astonished at the elegance with which he expressed himself, both in Latin and Greek! for he is so perfectly well skilled in each, that whichever he speaks, seems to be the language wherein he particularly excels. How extensive is his reading! how tenacious his memory! You would not imagine him the inhabitant of an ignorant country village, but a citizen of the learned Athens. In short, his conversation has increased my solicitude concerning my works, and taught me to revere the judgment of these studious country gentlemen, as much as that of more known and distinguished literati. Let me persuade you to consider them in the same light; for, believe me, upon a careful observation, you will often find in the literary, as well as military world, most powerful abilities concealed under a rustic garb. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MAXIMUS.

THE lingering disorder of a friend of mine gave me occasion lately to reflect, that we are always in the best moral disposition when afflicted with sickness. Where is the man, who, labouring under the pain of any distemper, is either solicited by avarice, or enflamed with lust? At such a season he is neither the slave of love, nor the fool of ambition; he looks with indifference upon the charms of wealth, and is contented with ever so small a portion of it, as being upon the point of leaving even that little. It is *then* he recollects there are Gods, and that he himself is but a man :*

* The awakening power of adversity, in general, is so beautifully described by the banished duke in Shakespeare's *As you like it*, that it will not, perhaps, be deemed foreign to the purpose to produce it as a parallel passage, especially as the sentiment in the second line is exactly the same with this of Pliny's before us :

This is no flattery : these are counsellors
That *feelingly persuade me what I am*.
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

Act 2. Sc. 1.

no mortal is *then* the object of his envy, his admiration, or his contempt; and having no malice to gratify, the tales of slander excite not his attention: his dreams run only upon the refreshment of baths † and fountains. These are the supreme objects of his thoughts and wishes; while he resolves, if he should recover, to pass the remainder of his days disengaged from the cares and business of the world; that is, in innocence and happiness. I may, therefore, lay down to you and myself a short rule, which the philosophers have endeavoured to inculcate at the expence of many words, and even many volumes; that “we should realize “in health, those resolutions we form in sickness.” Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO SURA.

THE present recess from business affords you leisure to communicate, and me to receive, information. I am very desirous to know your opinion concerning spectres; whether you believe they have a real existence, and are a sort of divinities, or are only the visionary impressions of a terrified

† The ancient physicians advised bathing as of sovereign efficacy in various disorders.

imagination? What particularly inclines me to give credit to their reality, is a story * which I lately heard of Curtius Rufus. When he was in low circumstances, and unknown in the world, he attended the governor of Africa into that province. One evening, as he was walking in the public portico, he was extremely surprised with the apparition of a woman, whose figure and beauty were more than human. She told him she was the tutelar power who presided over Africa, and was come to inform him of the future events of his life : that he should go back to Rome, where he should be raised to the highest honours ; should return to that province invested with the proconsular dignity, and there should die. Accordingly, every circumstance of this prediction was actually accomplished. It is said, farther, that, upon his arrival at Carthage, as he was coming out of the ship, the same figure accosted him upon the shore. It is certain, at least, that, being seized with a fit of illness, though there were no symptoms in his case that led his attendants to despair, he instantly gave up all hope of recovery ; judging, it should seem, of the truth of the future part of the prophecy, by that which had already been fulfilled, and of the misfortune

* This story is likewise related by Tacitus in the 11th book of his Annals, chap. 21.

which threatened him, by the success which he had experienced. To this story, let me add another, not less remarkable than the former, but attended with more terrifying circumstances; and I will give it you exactly as it was related to me. There was at Athens † a large and commodious house, which lay under the disrepute of being haunted. In the dead of the night, a noise, resembling the clashing of iron, was frequently heard, which, if you listened more attentively, sounded like the rattling of chains. At first it seemed distant, but approached nearer by degrees, till a spectre appeared in the form of an old man, extremely meagre and ghastly, with a long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands. The distressed inhabitants, in the meanwhile, passed their nights under the most dreadful terrors imaginable. This, as it broke their rest, ruined also their health, and brought on distempers, which, together with their constant horrors of mind, proved in the end fatal to their lives. Even in the day time, though the spirit did not then appear, yet the impression remained so strong upon their imaginations, that it still seemed before their eyes,

† Lucian ridicules a story pretty much resembling this, but lays the scene of it in Corinth. Vid. *Lucian. Philopseud.*

and kept them in perpetual alarm. By these means the house was at last deserted, as being deemed absolutely uninhabitable; so that it was now entirely abandoned to the ghost. However, in hopes that some tenant might be found, who was ignorant of this very alarming circumstance which attended it, a bill was put up, giving notice, that it was either to be let or sold. It happened that Athenodorus, the philosopher, came to Athens at this time, and reading the bill, enquired the price.—The extraordinary cheapness raised his suspicion; nevertheless, when he heard the whole story, he was so far from being discouraged, that he was more strongly inclined to hire it, and, in short, actually did so. When it grew towards evening, he ordered a couch to be prepared for him in the fore part of the house, and after calling for a light, together with his pencil and tablets, he directed all his people to retire. But, that his mind might not, for want of employment, be open to the vain terrors of imaginary noises and spirits, he applied himself to writing with the utmost attention. The first part of the night passed in usual silence, when at length the chains began to rattle: however, he neither lifted up his eyes, nor laid down his pencil, but diverted his observation by pursuing his studies with greater earnestness. The noise increased, and advanced nearer, till it seemed at the door,

and at last in the chamber. He looked up, and saw the ghost exactly in the manner it had been described to him: it stood before him, beckoning with the finger. Athenodorus made a sign with his hand, that it should wait a little, and threw his eyes again upon his papers; but the ghost still rattling his chains in his ears, he looked up and saw him beckoning as before. Upon this he immediately arose, and, with the light in his hand, followed it. The spectre slowly stalked along, as if encumbered with his chains, and turning into the area of the house, suddenly vanished. Athenodorus, being thus deserted, made a mark with some grass and leaves where the spirit left him. The next day, he gave information to the magistrates, and advised them to order that spot to be dug up. This was accordingly done, and the skeleton of a man in chains was there found; for, the body having lain a considerable time in the ground, was putrified, and had mouldered away from the fetters. The bones being collected together, were publicly buried; and thus, after the ghost was appeased by the proper ceremonies, the house was haunted no more. This story I believe upon the credit of others: what I am going to mention, I give you upon my own. I have a freedman named Marcus, who is by no means illi-

terate. One* night, as he and his younger brother were lying together, he fancied he saw some person upon his bed, who took out a pair of scissars, and cut off the hair from the top part of his head: in the morning, it appeared the boy's hair was actually cut, and the clippings lay scattered about the floor. A short time after, an event of the like nature contributed to give credit to the former story. A young lad of my family was sleeping in his apartment with the rest of his companions, when two persons, clad in white, came in, as he says, through the windows, and cut off his hair as he lay; and having finished the operation, returned

* Those who are unacquainted with the genius of the religion of ancient Rome, may be inclined to think meanly of our author's judgment, from this and the following story; but when it is remembered, that the greatest characters which we meet with among that illustrious people, are all strongly marked with a vein of superstition, no particular charge of weak credulity can, with justice, be brought from hence against Pliny. The truth is, it was a national turn, and countenanced by the constitution of their government, insomuch, that omens, even of the lowest kind, were considered previous to every step either of foreign or domestic concern: and the wisest and gravest of their historians, the judicious Livy not excepted, have given into accounts of this nature. Even a noble historian among our own countrymen has not scrupled to insert a relation of the same kind and credibility, in his History of the Civil Wars.

the same way they entered. The next morning it was found, that this boy had been served just as the other, and with the very same circumstance of the hair spread about the room. Nothing remarkable, indeed, followed these events, unless that I escaped a prosecution, in which, if Domitian (during whose reign this happened) had lived some time longer, I should certainly have been involved. For, after the death of that emperor, articles of impeachment against me were found in his scutro, which had been exhibited by Carus. It may therefore be conjectured, since it is customary for persons under any public accusation to let their hair grow, this cutting off the hair of my servants was a sign I should escape the imminent danger that threatened me. Let me desire you then maturely to consider this question. The subject merits your examination; as, I trust, I am not myself altogether unworthy to participate of the abundance of your superior knowledge. And though you should, with your usual scepticism, balance between two opinions, yet I hope you will throw the weightier reasons on one side, lest, whilst I consult you in order to have my doubt settled, you should dismiss me in the same suspense and indecision that occasioned you the present application. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO SEPTITIUS.

THERE are, it seems, certain persons, who, in your company, have blamed me, as being, upon all occasions, too lavish in commendation of my friends. I not only acknowledge the charge, but glory in it; for can there be a nobler error than an overflowing benevolence? But still, who are these, let me ask, that are better acquainted with my friends than I am myself? Yet grant there are any such, why will they deny me the satisfaction of so pleasing an error? For, supposing my friends deserve not the high encomiums I give them, certainly I am happy in believing they do. Let them recommend then this ungenerous discernment to those who imagine, (and their number is not inconsiderable) that they show their judgment when they indulge their censure. As for myself, they will never persuade me that I can love my friends* too well. Farewell.

* Balzac, with his usual happiness of allusion, observes,
" *Il y a des rivières qui ne font jamais tant de bien que quand
elles se débordent; de même l'amitié n'a rien de meilleur
que l'excès.*"

LETTER XXIX.

TO MONTANUS.

It would raise your laughter first, and then your indignation, and perhaps, after having composed yourself a little, you would be inclined to laugh again, when you read what I am going to mention, and which you will scarcely credit without ocular inspection. I lately observed, in the Tiburtine road,* near the first mile-stone, a monument erected to the memory of Pallas,† with the following inscription: THE SENATE DECREED TO HIM, AS A REWARD FOR HIS FIDELITY AND AFFECTION TO HIS PATRONS, THE HONOUR OF THE PRÆTORIAN ORNAMENTS,‡ TOGETHER WITH THE SUM OF FIFTEEN MILLION OF SESTERCES: § BUT HE WAS CONTENTED WITH ACCEPTING ONLY THE HONOUR. I am not indeed apt to

* The road leading to Tivoli, in Campania.

† He was at first a slave in the court of Claudius Cæsar, who afterwards gave him his freedom, and raised him to his chief favour. The patrons mentioned in this inscription are that emperor and his consort Agrippina, to whom Pallas had likewise recommended himself by some signal services.

‡ The senate, as a mark of honourable distinction, sometimes decreed the privilege of wearing the ornaments peculiar to certain dignities, to persons who had not enjoyed the office to which those ornaments were annexed.

§ About L. 320,000 of our money.

wonder at distinctions of this sort, which are oftener the gift of Fortune than of Judgment; but I could not help reflecting, when I read this inscription, how contemptible and ridiculous are those honours, which are thus sometimes thrown away upon dirt and infamy; which such a rascal, in short, had the assurance both to accept and to refuse, and then set himself forth to posterity, as an example of singular moderation! Yet why should it raise my indignation? rather let me treat it as a matter of derision, that persons of this vile character may not flatter themselves they have obtained any thing truly enviable, when their honours only expose them to severer ridicule. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO GENITOR.

I AM extremely concerned to find that you have lost your pupil; a youth, as your letter assures me, of such great hopes. Can I want to be informed, that his sickness and death must have interrupted your studies; knowing, as I do, with what exactness you fill up every duty of life, and how warm your affection is to all those to whom you give your esteem? As for myself, the usual business of Rome pursues me to this place; and I am not out of the reach of people even here, who appeal to

me, either as their judge or their arbitrator. Nor is this all; for, not only the farmers claim a sort of prescription to try my patience as they please, by their continual complaints; but also the necessity of letting out my farms gives me much trouble, as it is exceedingly difficult to find proper tenants. For these reasons, I can only study by snatches: still, however, I *do* study occasionally, and both compose and read by turns; but my reading teaches me, by a very mortifying comparison, with what ill success I attempt to be an author myself. Though indeed you give me great encouragement, when you compare the piece I wrote in vindication of Helvidius, to the oration of Demosthenes against Midias. I confess I had that harangue in my view; not that I was so vain and absurd as to pretend to rival it, but I endeavoured at least to imitate it, as far as the difference of our subjects would admit, and as nearly as a genius of the lowest rank can copy one of the highest. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI.

TO CORNUTUS.

CLAUDIUS POLLIO is extremely desirous of your friendship; and he deserves it, not only because he *desires* it, but because he offers you *his* in return:

as, indeed, few ever request the one, without being disposed to give the other. He is an upright, honest, good-natured man, and modest, I had almost said, beyond measure; if, indeed, that virtue can be carried to excess. We served in the army together, when he commanded a troop of horse; and I had an opportunity of taking a nearer view of his character, than merely what his being my fellow-officer gave me. I was appointed by the lieutenant-general to examine the accounts of the several companies; and as I discovered many instances of gross avarice and neglect of duty in some, so I found the highest integrity and exactest care in Pollio. He was afterwards promoted to very considerable employments in the revenue; yet no temptations could corrupt the innate integrity of his soul, and no prosperity swell his breast with pride, but he preserved, in all the variety of posts through which he passed, his honour and his humanity unimpeached; to which I will add, he supported the fatigues of business with the same firmness of mind he now discovers in his retreat. He once, indeed, quitted his retirement for a short time, greatly to his credit; being called forth by my worthy friend Corellius to his assistance, in purchasing and dividing those lands which were given to the public by the liberality of the emperor

Nerva.* And could there be any circumstance more to his honour, than to be thus particularly singled out as his coadjutor, by a person of so eminent a character as Corellius? You may judge how faithfully he reveres the sacred ties of friendship by the last wills † of several of his friends, particularly that of Musonius Bassus, a man of distinguished merit. Pollio (for he cultivates polite literature, as well as every other valuable qualification) has very gratefully endeavoured to perpetuate and extend the memory of Bassus, by publishing an account of his life; a circumstance too uncommon and too generous, not to be particularly applauded; since the generality of the world seldom mention the dead, unless to complain of them. ‡

* Nerva restored to the Romans all that Domitian had plundered them of; and gave a very large sum of money to be laid out in the purchase of lands for the support of decayed families.

† See Letter XX. of this book, note.

‡ Pliny seems to allude to the *Captatores*, or legacy hunters: a contemptible character, extremely common among the Romans in the decline of their state, when the prevailing luxury of the times rendered too many of them, in order to supply their extravagance, capable of any meanness to obtain a pecuniary remembrance in the wills of their wealthy acquaintance, and too much mortified not to complain when they found themselves disappointed.

Receive, then, this worthy man, greatly desirous, believe me, of your amity, with warm embraces, and even invite him to accept of it as what you owe him ; for, he who makes the first advances towards friendship, cannot so properly be said to solicit as to claim a return. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO FABATUS. *

I REJOICE that the arrival of my friend Tiro was acceptable to you ; but particularly, that you made use, as your letter informs me, of the opportunity which the presence of the proconsul afforded you, of manumizing † several of your slaves. For, as I wish to see our corporation ‡ improved by every possible means, so particularly by an increase of citizens, as that, of all others, is the strongest ornament a community can receive. I am pleased, too, (not out of a spirit of vanity, however I confess I am pleased) with what you add, that both you and I were highly complimented in the acknowledgments which were made upon this occasion ; for, as Xenophon observes, *the voice of*

* His wife Calphurnia's grandfather.

† See Letter XVI. of this book.

‡ Comum.

praise is sweet ; especially when we think we deserve it. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO TACITUS.

I STRONGLY presage, (and I am persuaded I shall not be deceived) that your histories will be immortal. I ingenuously own, therefore,* I so

* As some ingenious writers have affected to draw a comparison between our author and Cicero, to the disadvantage of the former ; it will not, it is hoped, be thought any want of reverence to a character, which deserves the highest veneration from every admirer of the fine arts, to set before the reader an instance, where Pliny greatly outshines that noble example, he was upon all occasions so desirous of copying. There is a letter of Cicero extant for the same purpose as this of Pliny's, addressed to his friend Lucceius, (*Ep. Fam.* l. 5. 12.) who was writing the history of his own times. The sensible Montaign condemns *both*, as instances of immoderate ambition ; and observes, (*Tom.* I. 329.) that " Fortune, as it were in pure spite, has taken care to hand down to us the vanity of these requests, while she has long since destroyed the histories they solicited." Let it be remarked, however, in justice to our author, that, upon a comparison of the two letters, the ambition of Pliny will appear far more reasonable than that of Cicero ; for the latter does not scruple to press his friend to transgress the rules of history, and break through the bounds of truth, in

much the more earnestly wish to find a place in them. If we are generally careful to have our persons represented by the best artists, ought we not to desire that our actions may be related and celebrated by an author of your distinguished abilities? In view to this, I acquaint you with the following affair, which, though it cannot have escaped your attention, as it is mentioned in the public journals, † still I acquaint you with it, that

his favour. “*Te plane etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornas ea vehementius etiam quam fortasse sentis, et in ea leges historiæ negligas, amorique nostro plusculum etiam quam concedit veritas largire:*” whereas Pliny, with a far nobler spirit, expressly declares he does not desire Tacitus to heighten the fact, and that actions of real worth need only to be set in their true light. In Cicero’s letter, we read the extravagant dictates of the most immoderate ambition; and he himself confesses he had not the assurance to look his friend in the face while he expressed them: “*Coram me tecum eadem hæc agere sæpe conantem deteruit pudor:*” in Pliny’s, we see nothing but what is agreeable to cool sense, and the honest ambition of one who was conscious he had acted well, and desirous posterity should know it.

† Whether Pliny means by the *Publica acta*, the journal of the senate, or what Tacitus (*Annal.* 30, 31.) and Suetonius (*In J. Cæsar*, 20.) call the *Diurna acta*, may admit of a doubt. The former seems to have been exactly in the nature of our votes of the house of commons, wherein a short account was given to the public of what passed in the

you may be the more sensible how agreeable it will be to me, that this action, greatly heightened by the hazard which attended it, should receive an additional lustre from the testimony of so bright a genius. The senate appointed Herennius Senecio, and myself, counsel for the province of Boetica, in their impeachment of Boebius Massa. He was condemned, and the house ordered his effects to be seized into the hands of the public officer. Shortly after, Senecio having learnt that the consuls intended to sit to hear petitions, came to me, and proposed that we should go together, and address them with the same unanimity we exe-

senate ; the latter appears very much to resemble our Gazette, being an authorised narrative of the transactions worthy of notice which happened in Rome. Petronius has given us the form of the latter of these, in his account of Trimalchio ; and as it may not, perhaps, be unentertaining to the English reader, to see how exactly a Roman newspaper runs in the style of a modern one, the following is an article or two out of it :

“ On the 26th of July, 30 boys and 40 girls were born at Trimalchio’s estate at Cuma.”

“ At the same time, a slave was put to death for uttering disrespectful words against his lord.”

“ The same day, a fire broke out in Pompey’s gardens, which began in the night, in the steward’s apartment.”—
PETRON. *Satyr*, p. 196. Ed. Var.

cuted the office which had been enjoined us, that they would not suffer Massa's effects to be dissipated by those who were appointed to preserve them. I answered, that as we had been counsel in this cause by order of the senate, I would recommend it to his consideration, whether it would be proper for us, after sentence had passed, to interpose any farther? "You are at liberty," said he, "to prescribe what bounds you please to yourself, who have no particular connections with the province, except what result from your late services to them; but they have a much stronger claim upon me, who was born there, and enjoyed the post of quæstor among them." If such, I replied, was his determined resolution, I was ready to attend him, that, whatever resentment should be the consequence, it might not fall singly upon himself.—Accordingly, we went to the consuls, where Senecio declared what he thought proper upon the occasion; to which I subjoined a few words on my part. We had scarcely ended, when Massa, complaining that Senecio had not acted against him with the fidelity of an advocate, but the bitterness of an enemy, desired he might be at liberty to prosecute him for treason.* The whole assembly

* The reader will undoubtedly be surprised to find a prosecution of *treason*, founded merely upon a suggestion of mis-

was struck with the utmost consternation and horror at this motion. I immediately rose up : " Most

conduct in the management of a private trial. But this difficulty will be cleared, perhaps, by considering the character of Domitian, in whose reign this transaction happened. To show any dislike to those who were the favourites of that infamous emperor, was construed by him into an act of treason against himself. He could gather that poisonous weed, (as our author in his panegyric strongly expresses it,) even from the barren sands of the theatre ; (*crimina majestatis in arena colligebat*,) for, not to admire even his gladiators, was deemed, in those wretched times, an act of disloyalty. If, therefore, Massa was in the good graces of Domitian, it would have been very easy for the former, to strain the honest zeal which Senecio had shown in conducting this cause into an instance of disrespect to the emperor. And the character which Tacitus gives of this Massa strongly supports that supposition ; for he describes him as the bane of every good man, and an instrument of those calamities which the Romans suffered under Domitian ; "*optimo cuique exitiosus*," says he, "*et in causas malorum quæ tulimus*."—TACIT. *Hist.* lib. iv. 50. It must be owned, however, that the expression in the original (*postulatio impietatis*) does not so absolutely and necessarily imply a prosecution of treason, but that it may admit of another interpretation. Accordingly, a gentleman of distinguished learning, who favoured the translator with his sentiments upon this passage, has offered a conjecture much too ingenious to be suppressed. " It was the practice (he observes) of the ancients, that all deposits, trusts, sequestrations, wills, &c. should be lodged

" noble consuls," said I, " I am afraid it should seem that Massa has tacitly charged me with having favoured him in this cause, since he did not think proper to join me with Senecio in the desired prosecution." This short speech was extremely well received by those who were present; as it soon afterwards got abroad, and was publicly mentioned with general applause. The late emperor Nerva, (who, though at that time in a private station, yet interested himself in every meritorious action which concerned the public,) wrote an admirable letter to me upon the occasion, wherein he not only congratulated me, but the age, which had

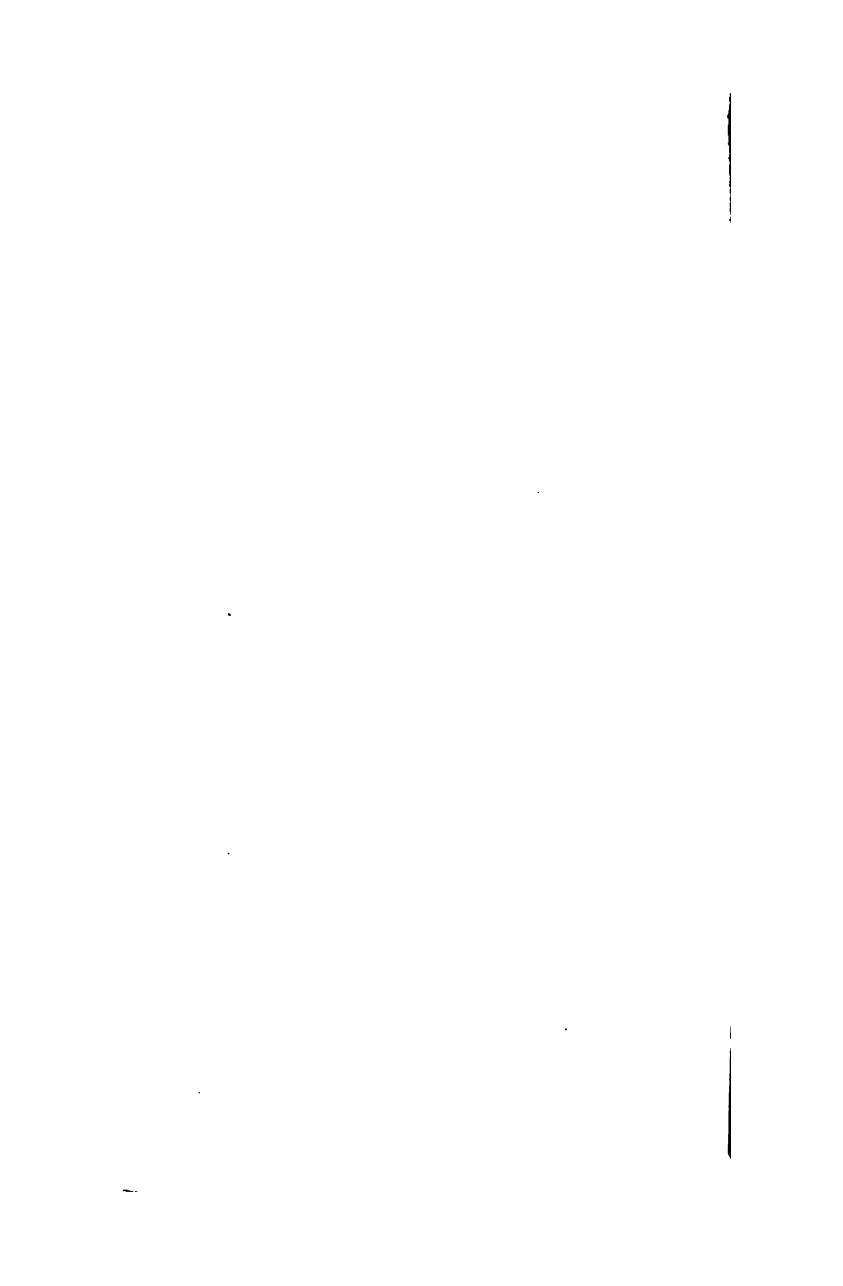
" in the most secure and unsuspected places : Accordingly, they chose their temples for that purpose, and the priests were of course the legal sequestrators :

*Nos ibi apud Theotimum omne aurum deposuimus,
Qui illic sacerdos est in Dianæ Ephesiæ.*

PLAUT. *Bacch.*

" And of this the classic and civil law books furnish abundant proof." He thinks, therefore, that an insinuation, that Massa had been tampering with the church to betray this *fidei-commissum*, and that the security became suspicious, might possibly carry an action of *impiety*. However, upon a closer examination of the letter, and comparing it with the history of that age, the interpretation adopted in the text may, perhaps, be justified.

produced an example so much in the spirit (as he was pleased to call it) of better days. But, whatever the fact be, it is in your power to heighten and spread the lustre of it; though far am I from desiring you would in the least exceed the bounds of reality. History ought to be guided by strict truth, and worthy actions require nothing more. Farewell.



THE
L E T T E R S
OF
PLINY.

BOOK EIGHTH.

LETTER I.

TO SEPTITIUS.

I HAD a good journey hither, excepting only that some of my servants have suffered in their health by the violent heats. Poor Encolpius, my reader,* whose assistance is of such service to me, both in my studies and amusements, was so affected by the dust, that it occasioned his spitting of blood; an accident which will prove not less unfortunate to me, than to himself, should he be thereby render-

* Persons of rank and literature, among the Romans, retained in their families a domestic, whose principal business was to read to them.

ed unfit for those purposes of literature in which he so greatly excels. If that should unhappily be the event, where shall I find one who will read my compositions with so much spirit, and so captivating an elocution, or admire them with so much feeling? But the gods seem to favour our better hopes, as his bleeding is stopped, and his pain abated. He is extremely temperate on *his* part; and no attention is wanting on mine, nor any care on his physician's. These considerations, together with the salubrity of this air, and the quiet of retirement, give us reason to expect, that the country will contribute as much to the restoration of his health, as to his repose. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO CALVISIUS.

OTHER people visit their estates in order to recruit their purses, but I go to mine only to return so much the poorer. I had sold my vintage to the merchants, who were extremely eager to purchase it, encouraged by the price it then bore, and what it was probable it would rise to; however, they were disappointed in their expectations. Upon this occasion, to have made one general undistinguished abatement to all, would have been much the easiest, but not the most equitable method. I hold it par-

ticularly worthy of a man of honour, to be governed by the principles of strict equity in his domestic as well as public conduct; in small, as in great affairs; in his own concerns, as well as in those of others: And if every deviation from rectitude is equally criminal, † every approach to it must be equally laudable. In the first place, then, I remitted to all in general one-eighth part of the price they had agreed to give me, that none might go away without a mark of my liberality; in the next, I particularly considered those, who having advanced to me large sums in part of payment, had done me so much the more service, and had been the greater sufferers themselves. To those, therefore, whose purchase amounted to more than ten thousand sesterces, ‡ I returned (beside that which I may call the general and common eighth) a tenth-part of what they had paid above that sum. I fear I do not express myself with sufficient clearness; I will endeavour to explain my meaning: for instance, suppose a man had purchased of me to the value of fifteen thousand sesterces, § I remitted to him one-eighth part of that whole sum, and like-

† It was a doctrine maintained by the Stoics, that all crimes are equal.

‡ About L. 80 of our money.

§ About L. 120 of our money.

wise one-tenth of five thousand. † Besides this, as several had deposited, in different proportions, part of the price they had agreed to pay, whilst others had advanced nothing; I thought it would not be agreeable to equity, that all these should be favoured with the same equal remission. To those, therefore, who had made any payments, I returned a tenth-part upon the sums so paid. By these means, I made a proper acknowledgment to each, according to their respective deserts; and likewise encouraged them, not only to deal with me for the future, but to be prompt in their payments. This instance of my good nature, or my judgment, (call it which you please,) was a very considerable expence to me. However, I found my account in it; for all the country greatly commended both the singular generosity of these abatements, and the principle by which I regulated them. Even those to whom I did not “mete (as the proverb is) by the same “measure,” but adjusted the remission to the sum they had advanced, held themselves obliged to me, in proportion to the probity of their principles; and went away pleased with having experienced, that not from me

The good and bad an equal boon receive. ‡

Farewell.

† About L. 40 sterling.

‡ Hom. *Iliad*, lib. ix. v. 319.

LETTER III.

TO SPARSUS.

You tell me, that, of all my works, the last I sent you is your greatest favourite. The same judgment has likewise been passed upon it by another of my very knowing and ingenious friends; and I am the more inclined to believe that neither of you is mistaken, not only as it is improbable you both should, but because I am much disposed to flatter myself. I always endeavour, indeed, that my last performance may appear the most finished; and for that reason I prefer the speech I lately published, to that which you mention: I will send it you as soon as I can meet with a safe conveyance. And now I have raised your expectations of this piece, I doubt you will be disappointed when it comes to your hands. In the mean while, however, you may indulge the agreeable persuasion, (and perhaps, too, without being disappointed,) that it is a composition you will read with pleasure. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO CANINIUS.

I GREATLY approve your design of writing a poem upon the Dacian war; * for where could you have chosen a recent subject so full of events, so extensive, or indeed so capable of poetical ornament?—a subject which, while it has all the marvellous of fiction, has all the recommendation of truth. You will sing of rivers taught to flow in new channels; of bridges † thrown over immense rivers; of en-

* Dacia comprehended part of the present kingdom of Hungary, together with part of Transylvania, Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia. It was first subdued and added to the Roman empire by Trajan; in memory of whose victories over this nation, the famous pillar is supposed to have been erected, called *Trajan's Pillar*, which is still to be seen entire at Rome. It is 128 Italian feet high, to the top of which you ascend by 184 steps, which wind round the inside. The outside is carved in basso relievo, with the representation of the most remarkable circumstances of this expedition. (*Bartoli colonna Traj.*) After the death of Trajan, his ashes were placed, as some authors say, in a golden ball on the top of this noble pillar; but Eutropius affirms they were deposited under it.—*Eutrop.* lib. viii. cap. 5.

† It is probable, Pliny here alludes to the famous bridge built by Trajan over the river Danube, in the upper Mœsia, that *last flight*, as Sir William Temple calls it, of *ancient ar-*

campments upon the dreadful precipices of craggy mountains; and of a brave prince,* who, though driven from his palace, preserved his courage unsubdued to the last moment of his life. You will describe, too, the glorious victor's double triumph, one of which was the first that was ever gained

chitecture. "It is styled, by the ancients, the most stately fabric of that nature in the universe. It was all of square stone; and contained 20 arches, each of them 120 feet above the foundation, and 60 feet in breadth, all distinct from each other 170 feet. It was built where the river was narrowest, and, consequently, where the stream was strongest and most rapid; which renders the fabric still more stupendous, on account of the almost insurmountable difficulties they must have met with in laying so large a foundation. The architect employed upon this occasion, was one Apollodorus of Damascus, who, it seems, left a description of this great work. We are told, that some remains are still to be seen of it near Zeveria, in Lower Hungary. Adrian, fearing the Barbarians might make use of it to invade the Roman territories, broke down the arches; but the piers were still standing in Dion Cassius's time, that is, 120 years after, though they served only to show, says the writer, the utmost extent of human power. This stupendous fabric was begun and ended in a summer."—*Univ. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 14.

* Decebalus, king of the Dacians; who, rather than fall into the hands of the conqueror, or live in dependence, put an end to his own life.

over that nation, till *then* invincible, as the other will be the last. There is one difficulty, however, and a very considerable one it is, where to find expressions equal to the subject; a difficulty which seems almost insuperable even by your elevated genius, though capable of rising to the most sublime topics. Some difficulty, too, you will find in reconciling those barbarous and uncouth names, especially that of the king * himself, to the harmony of Grecian numbers. There is nothing, however, so hard, that art and industry cannot mitigate at least, if not absolutely subdue. If Homer is allowed to contract or lengthen, or change even Grecian names, which are nothing harsh to the ear, in order to make them run more smoothly in his verse, why should the same liberty be refused to you, especially since it is necessity, and not affectation, that pleads for the indulgence? Come on, then, my friend; and after having, as poets are wont, invoked the gods, and, among the rest, that divine hero, † whose mighty deeds and deep counsels you are going to celebrate, loosen all your cordage,

* From hence Catanæus conjectures, upon the credit of Orosius, that the true name of the king was *Diurpaneus*, which was afterwards changed, by the Greek and Latin writers, to *Decebalus*.

† Trajan.

spread every sail, and then, if ever, launch forth with the full flow of your unbounded genius;—for you must allow me to be poetical, when I am talking to a poet. And now I insist that you send me every part, as soon as it shall have received your last finishing touches, and even before, while it is only a rough sketch, and unformed embryo. You will tell me, that a detached portion cannot please, like one entire piece; nor an unfinished plan be as satisfactory as a complete work. I am sensible it cannot, and therefore shall consider it only as in its first rudiments; as a separate and disjoined member; and shall lay it up in my scrutoire, to wait your last hand. Indulge me, then, with this very singular instance of your affection, and suffer me to be privy to what you would chuse to conceal even from every other person. In a word, though the more time and caution you take in communicating your work to the public, the more, possibly, it may heighten my esteem and approbation of the poet; yet the sooner, and with the less scruple, you send it to me, the more I shall love and applaud the friend. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO GEMINIUS.

OUR friend Macrinus has received a most severe wound: He has lost his wife! a lady whose exemplary virtues would have rendered her an ornament even to former times. He lived with her thirty-nine years in the most uninterrupted harmony. How respectful was her behaviour to him! and how well did she herself deserve the highest respect! In her character were united all those amiable virtues that adorn and distinguish the different periods of female life! It should surely afford great consolation to Macrinus, that he has thus long enjoyed so exquisite a blessing. But that reflection seems only so much the more to embitter his loss; as indeed the pain of parting with our happiness still rises in proportion to the length of its continuance. I cannot therefore but be greatly anxious for so valuable a friend, till this deep wound to his peace shall be in a state to admit of proper applications. Time, however, together with a satiety of grief itself, will best, and indeed necessarily, effect his cure. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO MONTANUS.

MY last letter has by this time, I suppose, informed you, that I observed lately, upon a monument erected to the memory of Pallas, the following inscription: "The senate † decreed to him, as a reward for his fidelity and affection to his patrons, the honour of the Prætorian ornaments, together with the sum of fifteen millions of sesterces; but he was contented with accepting only the honour." I afterwards thought it worth while to search for the original record, and it run in a strain so very extravagant, that this proud inscription seems modest and humble compared with the terms of the decree. The eulogiums which have been given to the most illustrious Romans, I do not say those of more remote antiquity, as the Scipios and the Mummii; but (to come nearer our own times) the Marii, the Syllas, and the Pompeys, fall infinitely short of those which have been lavished upon this man. Was it a spirit of banter, shall I suppose, or a principle of slavery, that produced this decree? I would ascribe it to the former, were not raillery unbecoming the dignity of the senate.

† See Book VII. letter 29th, and the notes there.

Must it be attributed, then, to the most abject subjection? Yet who is so wretchedly sunk as to be capable of such meanness! Or was it the lust of ambition that gave birth to this decree; and the mover of it in the senate proposed it, perhaps, with a view of paving the way to his own preferment? But whom can we suppose so irrational, as to desire to raise himself at the expence both of his own and the public honour, in a commonwealth, where the only means to be first in rank was to be first in flattering Pallas? Not to mention their offering to a slave the Prætorian honours, they were slaves themselves who made the offer: Not to animadvert upon that part of their decree, which says, that Pallas ought not only to be entreated, but compelled, to wear the golden † ring; no doubt it was not consistent with the dignity of the senate, that a person of Prætorian rank should wear an iron one: To pass over, I say, these less flagrant instances; mark, I beseech you, the following very extraordinary clause: “The senate, (and was it not expiated in form after so vile a pollution?) the senate returns thanks to Claudius, not only for the honour—able mention he himself was pleased to make of

† None but knights and senators had the privilege of wearing a gold ring; as an iron one was a badge of servitude.

“ Pallas, but for the opportunity afforded the house
“ also of testifying their benevolence towards him.”
It was highly to the credit, no doubt, of the senate,
not to appear deficient in point of gratitude to Pal-
las ! It goes on : “ That Pallas, to whom every
“ man acknowledges his obligations in the best
“ manner he is able, may receive the just reward
“ of his fidelity and singular services.” Would one
not imagine, that he had extended the bounds of
the empire, or, at least, rescued the armies of the
state ? But it proceeds : “ Since no occasion more
“ agreeable could present itself to the senate and the
“ Roman people, of exercising their liberality, than
“ an opportunity of rewarding one, who had proved
“ himself so honest and disinterested a guardian of
“ the emperor’s finances.” Such was the glorious
ambition of the senate at that time ; such the high-
est pleasure of the people ; such the most agreeable
occasion of exercising their liberality ; to have an
opportunity of exhausting the public treasures upon
Pallas !—It continues : “ The senate, therefore,
“ voted, that fifteen millions of sesterces should be
“ paid to him out of the treasury ; and, as he has
“ a soul far above desires of this kind, that the em-
“ peror should be so much the more strongly en-
“ treated, to use his authority with Pallas, to ob-
“ lige him to comply with the inclination of the se-
“ nate.” Nothing more indeed seemed wanting to

complete this extravagant scene, than that the imperial authority should interpose ; that Pallas should be pressed to yield to the desires of the senate ; that Cæsar himself should be called upon to assist the house in opposing this insolent piece of self-denial, lest the humble Pallas should refuse fifteen millions of sesterces ! He refused, nevertheless, the offer the public made him of this immense sum ; the only thing he could possibly have done more arrogant than the accepting of it. Yet even this the senate applauded, and seem to lament in the following clause : “ But whereas, our excellent prince, and father of his country, has, at the instance of Pallas, expressed his desire, to have that part of the vote withdrawn which relates to the giving him fifteen millions of sesterces out of the treasury ; the senate declares, that it was with much willingness, and great justice, they voted, among other honours, the said intended sum to Pallas, upon account of his fidelity and vigilance ; however, in compliance with the emperor’s desire, which they think cannot, without impiety, be opposed in any instance, they obey it even in the present.”—Figure to yourself, Pallas entering his protest, as it were, against the decree of the senate ; moderating the honours which were offered him, and refusing, as something much more valuable, the fifteen millions, when at the same time he

accepted the Prætorian ornaments, as a present of an inferior nature. Represent to yourself, Cæsar yielding to the entreaties of his freed-man in the face of the senate, or rather, indeed, obeying his commands; for, in the present instance, to *entreat* was to *command*! Think of the senate declaring, in every clause of this decree, that it was with great willingness and justice the house intended, among other honours, to present Pallas with this sum; and that it would have insisted upon his acceptance, but in compliance with the will of the emperor, which it was impious in any point to oppose! Was it owing then only to the obsequiousness of the senate, and the modesty of Pallas, that he did not receive fifteen millions out of the treasury? And was it in this instance, of all others, that they would have made an exception to their obedience, if they had thought it right to have done so in any? And now, after all this, you will imagine, perhaps, that you are come to the end. Have patience, however, there is still something more remarkable to follow: “And whereas it is highly expedient, that the generous disposition of the emperor, to approve and reward merit, should be every where made known and celebrated, especially in such places where those who have the care and administration of his affairs may be excited to an imitation; and whereas the approved fidelity and integrity of

“ Pallas may stimulate others to emulate so laudable an example,—It is, therefore, resolved, that the memorial which the emperor read to the senate, on the 28th of January last, together with the decree of the senate thereupon, shall be engraven in tablets of brass, and hung up near the martial statue of Julius Cæsar.”* It was not, it seems, sufficient, that the senate alone should be witness to this complicated disgrace; but the most frequented place in all Rome was chosen, in order to display it to the then present and future times: It was decreed, that all the honours of a most insolent slave, both those which he refused, and those which (as much as in the authors of the decree lay) he had borne, should be inscribed in brass; the Prætorian distinctions decreed to Pallas inscribed, like ancient treaties or sacred laws, upon public and everlasting monuments of brass! So great was their—I know not what epithet to give it—that the emperor chose to display his weakness, the senate their meanness, and Pallas his insolence, in the face of all the world! The senate was not ashamed to colour this turpitude with a show of reason; and a noble one, in truth, it was, even “ that others might be encouraged, by the rewards conferred upon Pallas, to a laudable emulation of his conduct!”

* In the forum.

Thus contemptible were all honours rendered, even those which the *noble* Pallas did not disdain to accept! And yet there were found persons of rank and birth so humble, as to desire and solicit those very honours, which they saw thus offered by slaves, and conferred upon a freed-man. Happy for me, that I was not born in those days, which I cannot help blushing for, as if I had actually lived in them; and, I doubt not, they raise the same sentiments in you. I know the honest feeling of your temper, and am persuaded, that if I have been transported into a greater warmth of expression than is suitable, perhaps, to a private letter, you will think I have shown rather too little, than too much indignation. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO TACITUS.

WHEN you sent me your treatise, it was not (as you were pleased to say yourself) as one master, or disciple, would communicate his works to another, but with the condescension of a preceptor to his scholar; for in that relation I must consider myself in respect to you. Accordingly, you summon me to my studies, whilst I am playing the truant, and prolonging the Saturnalian holidays.* Tell

* Vol. I. Book II. Let. 17, note.

me now, could I have made you a more stiff and awkward compliment, or given a stronger proof, that I am so far from deserving to be your instructor, that I am not even worthy to be your pupil? However, I will venture to assume the character you have invested me with, and exert the authority you have given me over your book : And with so much the more freedom, as I have nothing of my own to send you, upon which you may take your revenge. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO ROMANUS.

HAVE you ever seen the source of the river Clitumnus? as I never heard you mention it, I imagine not; let me therefore advise you to visit it immediately. It is but lately indeed I had that pleasure, and I condemn myself for not having viewed it sooner. At the foot of a little hill, covered with venerable and shady cypress trees, a spring issues, which, gushing out in different and

* Now called Clitumno : it rises a little below the village of Campello in Umbria. The inhabitants near this river still retain a notion, that its waters are attended with a supernatural property, imagining it makes the cattle white that drink of it ; a quality for which it is likewise celebrated by many of the Latin poets. See ADDISON'S *Travels*.

unequal streams, forms itself, after several windings, into a spacious basin, so extremely clear, that you may see the pebbles, and the little pieces of money which are † thrown into it, as they lie at the bottom. From thence it is carried off, not so much by the declivity of the ground, as by its own weight and exuberance. It is navigable almost as soon as it has quitted its source, and wide enough to admit a free passage for vessels to pass each other, as they sail with or against the stream. The current runs so strong, though the ground is level, that the large barges which go down the river have no occasion to make use of their oars; while those which ascend, find it difficult to advance, even with the assistance of oars and poles: and this vicissitude of labour and ease is exerting-

† The heads of considerable rivers, hot springs, large bodies of standing water, &c. were esteemed holy among the Romans, and cultivated with religious ceremonies. *Magnarum fluminum* (says Seneca) *capita reuerentur*; *sacris et ex arboribus vasti amnis eruptio arces habet*; *contantur aquarum calentium fontes, et stagna quedam, vel opacitas, vel immensa altitudo sacrauit*. Ep. 41. It was customary to throw little pieces of money into those fountains, lakes, &c. which had the reputation of being sacred, as a mark of veneration for those places, and to render the presiding deities propitious. Suetonius mentions this practice, in the annual vows which he says the Roman people made for the health of Augustus. *Suet. in vit. Aug.*

ly amusing, when one sails up and down merely for pleasure. The banks on each side are shaded with great numbers of verdant ash and poplar trees, as distinctly reflected in the stream, as if they were actually existing in it. The water is cold as snow, and as lucid too. Near it stands an ancient and venerable temple, wherein is placed a statue representing the river-god Clitumnus in his proper vestment; and, indeed, the prophetic oracles, here delivered, sufficiently testify the immediate presence of that divinity. Several little chapels are scattered round, dedicated to particular gods, distinguished by different names, and some of them too presiding over different fountains. For, besides the principal spring, which is, as it were, the parent of all the rest, there are several smaller streams, which, taking their rise from various sources, lose themselves in the river; over which a bridge is thrown, that separates the sacred part from that which lies open to common use. Vessels are allowed to come above this bridge, but no person is permitted to swim, * except below it. The Hispellates, † to whom Augustus gave this place,

* The touch of a naked body was thought to pollute these consecrated waters, as appears from a passage in Tacitus, l. 14. Ann. c. 22.

† Inhabitants of a town in Umbria, now called Spello.

furnish a public bath, and likewise entertain all strangers, at their own expence. Several villas, attracted by the beauty of this river, are situated upon its borders. In short, every surrounding object will afford you entertainment. You may also amuse yourself with numberless inscriptions, fixed upon the pillars and walls by different persons, celebrating the virtues of the fountain, and the divinity who presides over it. There are many of them you will greatly admire, as there are some that will make you laugh: but I must correct myself when I say so; you are too humane, I know, to laugh upon such an occasion. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO URSUS.

It is long since I have taken either a book, or a pencil, in my hand; since I have known the sweets of leisure and repose; since I have known, in short, that indolent, but agreeable satisfaction of doing nothing, and being nothing; so much have the affairs of my friends engaged me, and prevented me from enjoying the pleasures of retirement and contemplation. There is no sort of philosophical studies, however, sufficiently important to supersede the offices of friendship; for they are offices which

philosophy herself teaches us most religiously discharge. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO FABATUS.*

YOUR concern to hear of my wife's miscarriage will be equal, I know, to the earnest desire you had that we should make you a great-grandfather. The inexperience of her youth rendered her ignorant that she was breeding; so that she not only neglected the proper precautions, but managed her in a way extremely unsuitable to a person in those circumstances. But she has severely atoned for her mistake, by the utmost hazard of her life. Though you certainly will be afflicted to see yourself thus disappointed, in your advanced age, of the immediate hopes of leaving a family behind you, yet it deserves your gratitude to the Gods, that, the preservation of your grand-daughter, you have still reason to expect that blessing: an expectation so much the more assured, as she has given the proof, though an unhappy one indeed, of her being capable of bearing children. These, at least, are reflections by which I endeavour to confirm my own hopes, and console myself under my present

* His wife's grandfather.

disappointment. You cannot more ardently desire to have great-grand-children, than I to have children; as the dignity of both our families seems to open to them a sure road to honours, and they will inherit the glory of descending from a long race of ancestors, whose fame is as extensive as their nobility is ancient. May we but have the pleasure of seeing them born, it will make us amends for the present mortification! Farewell.

LETTER XL.

TO HISPULA. *

WHEN I consider, that you love your mother more fondly than if she were your own daughter I ought, in the first place, to inform you of her recovery, before I tell you she has lost it. The sentiments of joy at the one may beget in the other to be afflicted at the other. Thus, when indeed, after your first transport of joy is over, you will see some reason to be sensible of your joy for the danger she has escaped will tremble at the thought of the loss she has undergone. But I now hope she will recover, and again resume her wonted health, and covering her strength and vigour, as she was

them. To say the truth, (and I may now safely tell it you,) her life was in the utmost danger; not indeed from any fault of her own, but a little from the inexperience of her youth. To this must be imputed the cause of her miscarriage, and the sad experience she has had of the consequence of not knowing she was breeding. But though this misfortune has deprived you at present of a nephew, or a niece, to console you for the loss of your brother, you should reflect, that it is a blessing which seems rather to be deferred than denied, since *her* life is preserved from whom that happiness is to be expected. I entreat you then to represent this accident to your father* in the most favourable light; as your sex are the best advocates in cases of this kind. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO MINUTIANUS.

I BEG you to excuse me this one day: Titinius Capito is to recite a performance of his, and I know not whether it is most my inclination, or my duty, to attend him. He is a man of a most amiable disposition, and justly to be numbered among the brightest ornaments of the present age. He dili-

* Fabatus, grandfather to Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

gently cultivates the polite arts himself, and generously admires and encourages them in others; to many of whom he is the protector, the refuge, and the liberal patron; as he is to all of them a bright and exemplary model. In a word, he is the restorer and reformer of literature, now, alas! well nigh sinking into total neglect and decay. His house is open to every man of genius, who has any works to rehearse; and it is not *there* alone that he attends these assemblies with the most obliging good-nature. I am sure, at least, he never once excused himself from mine, if he happened to be at Rome. I should, therefore, with a more than ordinary ill grace, refuse to return him the same favour, especially upon so honourable an occasion. Should not I think myself obliged to a man, *who*, if I were engaged in any law-suit, generously attended the cause in which I was interested? And am I less indebted, now that my whole care and business is of the literary kind, for his assiduity in my concerns of this sort; which, if not the only, is however the principal instance, wherein I can be obliged? But though I owed him no return of this nature; though I were not engaged to him by the reciprocal tie of the same good offices he has done me; yet not only the powers of his extensive genius, as elegantly polished as it is severely correct, but the dignity of his subject, would strongly in-

cite me to be of his audience. He has written an account of the deaths of several illustrious persons, some of whom were my particular friends. It is a pious office then, it should seem, as I could not be present at their obsequies, to attend, at least, this (as I may call it) their funeral oration; which, though a late, is however, for that very reason, a more unsuspected tribute to their memories. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO GENIALIS.

I MUCH approve of your having read my orations with your father. It is highly for your advantage to learn from a man of his eloquence, what to admire in compositions of this kind, and what to condemn; as you will at the same time be trained up in an habitual custom of speaking your real sentiments. You see whose steps it is you ought to follow; and happy are you in having a living example before you, which is at once the nearest and the noblest model you can pursue! In a word, that he whom nature designed you should most resemble, is, of all others, the person whom you should most endeavour to imitate. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO ARISTO.

As you are no less acquainted with the political law of your country, (which includes the customs and usages of the senate,) than with the civil, I am particularly desirous to have your opinion, whether I was mistaken in an affair which lately came before the house. This I request, not with a view of being directed in my judgment as to what is passed, (for that is now too late) but in order to know how to conduct myself, if any case of the same nature should hereafter happen to arise. You will ask, perhaps, why I apply to you for information concerning a point, wherein I ought to be well instructed? But the tyranny of former reigns,* as it introduced a neglect and ignorance of all other parts of useful knowledge, so particularly of what relates to the customs of the senate; for who is there so idly industrious as to endeavour to learn, what he never can have an opportunity of practising? Besides, it is not very easy to retain even the knowledge one has acquired, where no occasion of exercising it occurs. Hence it was, that Liberty, at her return,† found us totally ignorant and inexperienced

* Those of Nero and Domitian.

† When Nerva and Trajan received the empire.

in what relates to her interest; and thus, in our eagerness to taste her sweets, we are sometimes hurried on to action, ere we are well informed in what manner it is proper we should act. But it was wisely provided by the institution of our ancestors, that the young men should learn from the old, not only by precept, but by their own observation, how to behave in that sphere, wherein they were one day themselves to move; as these, in their turn, transmitted the same mode of instruction to their children. Upon this principle it was, that the youth were sent early into the army, that, by being taught to obey, they might learn to command, and, whilst they followed others, might be trained by degrees to become leaders themselves. And thus, when they were candidates for any office, they were obliged to stand at the entrance of the senate, that they might be spectators before they were admitted parties in the public council of the empire. The father of each youth was his instructor upon these occasions; or, if he were dead, some person of years and dignity supplied the place of a father. Accordingly, they were taught by that surest method of discipline, example, how far the right of proposing any law to the senate extended; what privileges a senator had in delivering his opinion in the house; the power of the magistrates in that assembly, and the rights of the rest of the

members; where it is proper to yield, and where to insist; when and how long to speak, and when to be silent; how to distinguish and separate complicated and inconsistent propositions,* and how to improve upon another member's motion; in a word, they learnt by this means whatever relates to the conduct of a senator in the house. As for myself, it is true, I served in the army when I was a youth; but it was at a time when courage was suspected, and want of spirit honoured; when generals were without authority, and soldiers without modesty; when there were neither discipline nor obedience in the camp, but all was riot, disorder, and confusion; in short, when it was happier to forget, than to remember what one learnt. I attended, likewise, in my youth, the senate, but a senate that was mute and dispirited; where it was dangerous to speak one's sentiments, and infamous to be silent. What satisfaction in learning, or indeed what could be learnt, when the senate sate in the utmost indolence, or acted with the highest infamy; when

* If any opinion proposed to the senate was thought too general, and to include several distinct articles, some of which might be approved, and others rejected, it was usual to require that it might be divided: and this they sometimes did by a general voice of the assembly, crying out, *divide, divide!* Middlet. Treat. on the Roman Senate, 137.

they were convened either for cruel or ridiculous purposes; * and when their deliberations were never serious, though often sad! But I was not only a witness to this scene of wretchedness, as a spectator; I bore my share of it too as a senator, and both saw and suffered under it for many years; which so broke and damped my spirits, that they have not even yet been able fully to recover themselves. It is but within a short time (for all time seems short in proportion to its happiness) since we could take any pleasure in knowing what relates to, or in exercising the duties of, our station. Upon these considerations, therefore, I may reasonably

* The fourth satire of Juvenal will serve as a comment upon this passage, where he acquaints us, that a turbot of a most enormous size being presented to Domitian, he immediately convened the senate, in order to consult in what manner it should be dressed. The poet mentions the names of the persons who spoke in this remarkable debate, together with their several opinions upon a question so important, concluding his satire with this pathetic wish :

*Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset
Tempora sævitæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi
Illustresque animas impune !——*

Ah ! as this day, that he had spent the rest,
And his dire reign had only been a jest !
Nor Rome her noblest blood had tamely seen
Flow unrevenged !——

entreat you, in the first place, to pardon my error, (if I have committed one,) and in the next, to lead me out of it by your superior knowledge; for, I am sensible you have ever been diligent to enquire into the constitution of our country, both with respect to its public and private, its ancient and modern, its general and particular laws. I am persuaded, indeed, the point upon which I am going to consult you, is so singular, that even those whose great experience in public business must have made them, one should suppose, acquainted with every thing of this nature, were either doubtful, or absolutely ignorant in what manner to proceed. I shall be the more excusable, therefore, if I happen to have been mistaken; as you will gain so much the higher praise, if you can set me right in an affair, which it is not clear has ever yet fallen within your observation. The inquiry, then, before the house, was concerning the death of Afranius Dexter, who being found murdered, it was uncertain whether he fell by his own hands, or by those of his freedmen; and if the latter, whether they committed the fact in obedience * to the commands of

* Those who destroyed themselves frequently made use of the hands of their slaves for that purpose. Thus Brutus and Cassius, after the loss of that fatal battle which decided the liberties of Rome, ran each of them upon the swords of their slaves. *Florus*, l. 4. c. 7.

Afranius, or were prompted to it by their own villainy. After they had been put to the torture, a certain senator (it is of no importance to mention his name, but if you are desirous to know, it was myself) was for acquitting them; another proposed, that they should be banished; and a third, that they should suffer death. These several opinions were so extremely different, that it was impossible either of them could stand with the other; and, therefore, in taking the votes, I thought they ought to be numbered separately. For, what is there in common between the opinion of those who deemed the accused deserved banishment, and those who were of opinion they merited death? certainly nothing more than between those who voted for banishment, and the others who were for acquitting the prisoners. Though, indeed, he who was for discharging them approached nearer to the sentiments of him who proposed exile, than the other who moved that they should suffer death: For both the former agreed at least in this, that their lives should be spared, whereas the latter were for a capital conviction. In the mean while, those senators who were for punishing with death, and those who proposed banishment, sate together on the same side of the house: and thus, by a present appearance of union, covered their real disagreement. I moved, therefore, that each of the three opinions

should be separately voted, and that two of them should not, under favour of a short truce between themselves, join against the third. I insisted, that such of the members who were for capital punishment should divide from the others who voted for banishment; and that these two distinct parties should not be permitted to form themselves into a body, in opposition to those who declared for acquittal, when they would immediately after disunite again: for it was not material that they agreed in disliking one of the proposals, since they differed with respect to the other two. It seemed very extraordinary, that he who moved that the freedmen should be banished, and the slaves suffer death, should not be allowed to join these two motions in one, but that the question should be ordered to be put to the house in the disjunctive; and yet that the votes of those who were for inflicting capital punishment upon the freedmen, should be taken in conjunction with those who were for banishing them. For if, in the former instance, it was reasonable that the motion should be divided, because it comprehended two distinct propositions; I could not see why, in the latter case, suffrages so extremely different should be thrown into the same scale. Permit me then, notwithstanding the point is already determined, to go over it again, as if it were still undecided, and to lay before you those

reasons, at my ease, which I offered to the house in the midst of much interruption and clamour. Let us suppose there had been only three judges appointed to hear this cause, one of which was of opinion, that the parties in question deserved death; the other, that they should only be banished; and the third, that they ought to be acquitted; should the two former unite their weight to overpower the latter, or should each be separately balanced? For, the first and second are no more compatible with each other than the second and third. They ought, therefore, to be counted in the senate as contrary opinions, since they were delivered as different ones. Suppose the same person had moved, that they should both have been banished and put to death; could they possibly, in pursuance of this opinion, have suffered both punishments? Or could it have been esteemed as one consistent motion, when it united two such different decisions? Why then should the same opinion, when delivered by distinct persons, be considered as one and entire, which would not be deemed so if proposed by a single man? Does not the law manifestly imply, that a distinction is to be made between those who are for a capital conviction, and those who are for banishment, in the very form of words made use of when the house is ordered to divide? "You who are of such an opinion, come to this side; you who

are of any other, go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow." Let us examine this form, and weigh every sentence: "You who are of this opinion:" that is, for instance, you who are for banishment, "come on this side;" namely, on the side of him who moved for banishment. From whence it is clear he cannot remain on the side of those who are for death. "You who are for any other;" observe, the law is not contented with barely saying *another*, but it adds *any*. Now can there be a doubt, whether they who declare for a capital conviction are of *any* other opinion, than those who propose exile! "Go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow:" does not the law seem, as it were, to force those who are of different sentiments to contrary sides? Does not the consul himself point out, not only by this solemn form of words, but by his hand and gesture, the place in which every man is to remain, or to which he is to go over? "But, it is objected, if this separation be made between those who vote for inflicting death, and those who are on the side of exile, the opinion for acquitting the prisoners must necessarily prevail." But how does that affect the parties who vote? Certainly it becomes not them to contend by every art, and urge every expedient, that the milder sentence may not take place. "Still," say they, "those who are for condemning

“ the accused, either capitally or to banishment, “ should first be set in opposition to those who are for “ absolving them, and afterwards weighed against “ each other.” Thus, as, in certain public games, some are by lot to engage with the conqueror ; so, it seems, in the senate, there is a first and second combat, and of two different sentiments, the prevailing one has still a third to contend with. What ! when any particular opinion is received, do not all the rest fall of course ? Is it reasonable, then, that one should be thrown into the scale merely to weigh down another ? To express my meaning more plainly : unless the two parties, who are respectively for capital punishment and exile, immediately separate upon the first division of the house, it would be to no purpose afterwards to dissent from those with whom they had joined before. But I am dictating instead of receiving instruction. Tell me, then, whether you think these votes should have been taken separately ? My sentiments, ’tis true, prevailed ; nevertheless, I am desirous to know whether you think I ought to have insisted upon this point, or have yielded, as that member did who declared for capital punishment ? For, convinced, I will not say of the legality, but at least of the equity of my proposal, he receded from his own opinion, and went over to the party for exile ; fearing, perhaps, if the votes were taken separately,

(which he saw would be the case,) the freedmen would be acquitted: For, the numbers were far greater on that side than on either of the other two, separately counted. The consequence was, that those who had been influenced by his authority, when they saw themselves forsaken by his going over to the other party, gave up a motion which they found abandoned by the first proposer, and deserted, if I may so express it, with their leader. Thus, the three opinions terminated at length in two: and of those, one prevailed, and the other was rejected: while the third, as it was not powerful enough to conquer both the others, had only to choose to which of the two it would yield. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO JUNIOR.

I FEAR I have overloaded you by sending so many volumes at once; but, if I have, remember it was your own request. Besides, as you wrote me word you were likely to reap but little from the fruits of your vineyards, I imagined you would be at leisure to *reap* (as we say) the *fruits* of learning. I have received the same bad accounts of my own farms; and am therefore at leisure to compose tracts for you, provided I can but raise

money sufficient to furnish me with good parchment. For, should I be reduced to use the coarse and spongy sort, I must either not write at all, or whatever I compose, whether good or bad, must necessarily undergo one general blot ! Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO PATERNUS.

THE sickness which has lately run through my family, and carried off several of my domestics, some of them too in the prime of their years, has deeply afflicted me. I have two consolations, however, which, though they are not adequate to so considerable a loss, still they are consolations. One is, that as I have always very readily manumized my slaves, their death does not seem altogether immature, if they lived long enough to receive their freedom : the other, that I have allowed them to make a kind of will,* which I observe as religiously as if they were legally entitled to that privilege. I receive and obey their last requests, as so many absolute commands, suffering them to dispose of their effects to whom they please ; with this single restriction, that they leave

* A slave could acquire no property, and consequently was incapable, by law, of making a will.

them to some of the family; which, to persons in their station, is to be considered as a sort of commonwealth. But though I endeavour to acquiesce under these reflections, yet the same tenderness which led me to show them these indulgences, still breaks out, and renders me too sensibly affected by their deaths. However, I would not wish to be incapable of these tender impressions of humanity; though the generality of the world, I know, look upon losses of this kind in no other view, than as a diminution of their property, and fancy, by cherishing such an unfeeling temper, they discover superior fortitude and philosophy. Their fortitude and philosophy, I will not dispute, but humane, I am sure they are not; for it is the very criterion of true manhood to *feel* those impressions of sorrow, which it endeavours to resist; and to admit, not to be above the want, of consolation. But, perhaps, I have detained you too long upon this subject, though not so long as I would. There is a certain pleasure in giving vent to one's grief; especially when we pour out our sorrow in the bosom of a friend, who will approve, or, at least, pardon our tears. † Farewell.

† There is something so uncommonly amiable in this *Family Piece*, that the reader cannot be displeased with being stopped a moment to take a second view of it. If

LETTER XVII.

TO MACRINUS.

Is the season with you as rude and boisterous as it is with us? All here is tempest and inundation. The Tiber has swelled its channel, and overflowed its banks far and wide. Though the wise precaution of the emperor had guarded against this evil, by cutting several outlets to the river; it has, nevertheless, flooded all the fields and vallies, and

nothing remained of Pliny but this single *trait* of his character, we might nevertheless assuredly pronounce of him, that he was ennobled by every social virtue: for as it is certain the greatest minds have ever been most open to impressions of the humane kind; so every moral virtue necessarily flows from benevolence, as from its true and genuine source. It is impossible that a man, who has a just feeling of the calamities of others, can deliberately break through the moral ties of any kind; because it is certain he cannot do so, without being the occasion of suffering to those who stand within the influence of the particular action. This principle also will ever afford the most unerring test of patriotism, or the public affection; for the cruel and unrelenting, in private and domestic life, can never act upon the true notion of liberty, in the more enlarged relations of public concerns. With great justice, therefore, our author makes this generous principle the evidence of real manhood; as Juvenal describes a tenderness of disposition to be the prin-

entirely overspread the whole face of the flat country. It seems to have gone out to meet those rivers, which it used to receive and carry off in one united stream; and has driven them back to deluge those countries it could not itself reach. That most delightful of rivers, the Anio, ‡ which

capital note of distinction which nature has marked out between the rational and brute creation :

———— *Mollissima corda*

*Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quæ lachrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensus.*

———— *Quis enim bonus,—*

*Ulla aliena sibi credat mala ? separat hoc
Nos a grege mutorum—* Satyr. 15. 131.

Heaven gave the tear humane, a sign confest,
Soft pity dwells within the mortal breast;
That noblest passion noblest bosoms know !——
Turned ever virtue from another's woe?
'Tis man's great privilege, the glorious line
That marks from brute, the human soul divine.

‡ Now called the Teverone, which falls into the Tiber about three miles from Rome. The eloquent Balzac, speaking of a little river, has a thought which is celebrated by Bohours: "*Cette belle eau (says he) aime tellement ce pais, qu'elle se divise en mille branches, et fait une infinité d' isles et de tours, a fin de s'y amuser d'avantage.*"—*Dial. sur la man. de bien pens.* p. 137. But he is indebted to Pliny

seems invited and detained in its course by the charming villas that are situated upon its banks, has almost entirely rooted up and carried away the woods which shaded its borders. It has overthrown whole mountains, and, in endeavouring to find a passage through the ruins that obstructed its way, has forced down houses, and risen over the desolation it has occasioned. The inhabitants of the hill countries, who are situated above the reach of this inundation, have been the melancholy spectators of its dreadful effects; having seen costly furniture, instruments of husbandry, ploughs, and oxen with their drivers, whole herds of cattle, together with the trunks of trees, and beams of the neighbouring villas, floating about in different parts. Nor, indeed, have these more elevated places themselves, to which the waters could not rise, escaped the calamity. A continued heavy rain, as destructive as the river itself, poured down in torrents upon them, and has destroyed all the inclosures which marked that fertile country. It has damaged, likewise,

for all the merit of it, as it is plainly a copy from this passage: an observation by no means intended as a reflection upon the French writer, who has too many original beauties of his own to suffer from a discovery of those which are not; it is designed only to show, that the most celebrated author in the epistolary way among the moderns found advantage in conversing with Pliny.

and even overturned, some of the public buildings, where numbers have been miserably buried in the ruins. And thus those people, besides the loss of their effects, have suffered the additional misfortune of lamenting their friends. I am extremely uneasy, lest this extensive ruin should have spread to you : I beg therefore, if it have not, you will immediately ease me of my fears ; and indeed, I desire you would inform me, though it actually should ; for the difference is not great between fearing a danger and feeling it, except that the evil one feels has some bounds, whereas one's apprehensions have none. For, we can suffer no more than what actually *has* happened, but we fear all that possibly *may* have happened. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO RUFINUS.

It is a mistaken maxim, too generally advanced, that a man's will is a kind of mirror, wherein one may clearly discern his genuine character. We have a late instance to the contrary in Domitius Tullus, who appears a much better man since his death, than during his life. After having artfully encouraged the expectations of those who paid court to him, with a view to be his heir, he has left his

estate to his niece, whom he adopted. He has given, likewise, several very considerable legacies among his grand-children, and also to his great-grandson. In a word, he has shown himself a kind relation throughout his whole will; which is so much the more to be admired, as it was not expected. This affair has been much the subject of conversation; some representing him as guilty of the basest falsehood and ingratitude; and while they thus complain, as if they were actually his disinherited kindred, their invectives betray the mean motives of the attentions they paid him: others, on the contrary, applauding him extremely for having disappointed the hopes of this infamous* tribe of men, whom, the manners of the age considered, it is but prudence to deceive. They add, that he was not at liberty to make any other will, and that he cannot so properly be said to have bequeathed, as returned, his estate to his adopted daughter, since it was by her means he became possessed of it. For, Curtilius Mancina, whose daughter Domitius Lucanus, brother to this Tullus, married, having taken a dislike to his son-in-law, devised his estate to this young lady, (who was the issue of that marriage) upon condition that Luca-

* See Vol. I. Book iv. Let. 15, note.

nus, her father, would emancipate her. † He accordingly did so; but she being afterwards adopted by Tullus, her uncle, the design of Mancian's will was entirely frustrated. For, these two brothers having never divided their patrimony, but living together as joint tenants of one common estate, the daughter of Lucanus, notwithstanding the act of emancipation, returned back again, together with her former fortune, under the dominion of her father, in consequence of this fraudulent adoption. It seems, indeed, to have been the fate of these two brothers, to be enriched by those who had the greatest aversion to them. For, Domitius Afer,

† That is, would make her free; for (as has been observed in the notes above) the power of a father over his children was unlimited amongst the Romans. It extended not only to their fortunes, but their lives, and was even greater than what the laws allowed over their slaves; for if a master sold his slave, who afterwards obtained his freedom, the former owner had no farther claim; whereas, in the case of a son, the father's right was not absolutely extinguished by the sale, but if the son obtained his freedom, he again came under his dominion. This authority could not be wholly disannulled, till the son had been thrice sold, and as often recovered his liberty; it then entirely ceased. The law vested the same power likewise as fully in the adoptive father, as in the natural. Justinian observes, this authority was peculiar to the Romans, and allowed by no other nation whatsoever. *Inst.* l. 1.

by whom they were adopted, left a will in their favour, which he had made eighteen years before his death; though it was plain he had altered his sentiments with respect to the family, because he was instrumental in procuring the confiscation of their father's estate. There is something extremely singular in the resentment of Afer, and the good fortune of the other two; as it was very extraordinary, on the one hand, that Domitius should endeavour to proscribe the man whose children he had adopted, and on the other, that these brothers should find a parent in the very person that ruined their father. But Tullus acted justly, after having been appointed sole heir by his brother, in prejudice to his own daughter, to restore to her this estate, which came to him from Afer, as well as to devise to her all the fortune which he possessed in common with his brother. His will, therefore, deserves the highest commendation, as it is the dictates of nature, justice, and honour; having thereby returned his obligations to his several relations, according to their respective good offices towards him. He has made a just acknowledgment, likewise, to his wife; having by his will given to that excellent woman, who patiently endured much upon his account, several delightful villas, besides a large sum of money. Indeed, she deserved so much the more at h

hands, as she was greatly censured for her marriage with him. It was thought unworthy a person of her rank and merit, after having had a former husband, by whom she had issue, to marry, in the decline of her life, an old man, merely for his wealth, and who was so sickly and infirm, that, even had he passed the best years of his youth and health with her, she might well have been disgusted with him. He had so entirely lost the use of all his limbs, that he could not move himself in bed without assistance; and the only enjoyment he had of his riches, was to contemplate them. He was even reduced to the wretched necessity (and one cannot mention it without loathing as well as pity) of having his teeth washed and cleansed by others; in allusion to which, he used frequently to say, when he was complaining of the indecencies which his infirmities obliged him to suffer, that he was every day compelled to lick his servant's fingers. Still, however, he lived on, and was willing to accept of life upon these miserable terms. That he lived so long, was particularly owing, indeed, to the care of his wife, who, whatever reputation she might lose at first by her marriage, acquired great honour by her conduct towards him during its continuance.

Thus I have given you all the news of the town, where nothing is talked of but Tullus. It is ex-

pected his curiosities will shortly be sold by auction. He had such an abundant collection of ancient statues, that he actually filled an extensive garden with them the very same day he purchased it; not to mention numberless other antiques, which stood neglected in a lumber-room.

Now, if you have any thing worth communicating, in return, I hope you will not refuse the trouble of giving me the intelligence; not only as we are all of us naturally fond, you know, of news, but because interesting anecdotes afford examples which may be of use in respect to our own conduct. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO MAXIMUS.

My studies prove both an entertainment and consolation to me; and as there is no pleasure I prefer to them, so there is no uneasiness they do not alleviate. In this season, therefore, of dejection, occasioned by the indisposition of my wife, the dangerous sickness of some of my servants, and the death of others, I have recourse to my books, as to the sovereign consolers of my sorrows. It is true, indeed, they teach me a greater sensibility to misfortunes, but they teach me, too, how to bear them with more patience. It is an esta-

blished rule with me, before I publish any of my productions, to consult the judgment of my friends, and especially yours. I request you, therefore, to examine, with particular care, the performance I here send you, as I am afraid the disquietude of my mind may have prevented me from giving it the attention I ought. For, though I could command my grief so far as to sit down to write, I was not sufficiently master of my heart, to do so with ease and cheerfulness: but if study naturally tends to compose the mind, the mind must be previously in a composed state to give a proper effect to our studies. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO GALLUS.

THOSE works of art or nature, which are usually the motives of our travels, are often overlooked and neglected, if they happen to lie within our reach; whether it be that we are naturally less inquisitive concerning those things which are near us, while our curiosity is excited by remote objects; or because the easiness of gratifying a desire is always sure to damp it; or, perhaps, that we defer, from time to time, viewing what we know we have an opportunity of seeing whenever we please. Be the reason what it may, it is certain

there are several rarities in and near Rome, which we not only have never seen, but have never so much as heard of; and yet, if they had been the production of Greece, or Egypt, or Asia, or any other country which we admire as fruitful in wonders, they would, long since, have been the subjects both of our reading, conversation, and inspection. For myself, at least, I confess I have lately been entertained with a sight of one of these our indigenous singularities, to which I was an entire stranger before. My wife's grandfather desired I would look upon his estate near Ameria.* As I was walking over his grounds, I was shown a lake that lies below them, called Vadimon,† which I was informed had several very extraordinary qualities attending it. This raised my curiosity to take a nearer view. Its form is exactly circular; there is not the least obliquity or winding; but all is regular and even, as if it had been hollowed and cut out by the hand of art. The water is of a clear sky blue, though with somewhat of a greenish cast; it seems, by its taste and smell, impregnated with sulphur, and is deemed of great efficacy in all fractures of the limbs, which it is supposed to consolidate. Notwithstanding it is but of a mode-

* Now called Amelia, an episcopal city in Ombria.


† Now called *Lago di Bassanello*.

rate extent, yet the winds have a great effect upon it, frequently throwing it into violent commotions. No vessels are suffered to sail here, as its waters are held sacred,* but several floating islands† swim about in it, covered with reeds and rushes, together with other plants, which the neighbouring marsh and the borders of the lake produce. These islands differ in their size and shape; but the edges of all of them are worn away by their frequent collision against the shore and each other. They have all of them the same height and motion, and their respective roots, which are formed like the keel of a boat, may be seen hanging down in the water, on whichever side you stand. Sometimes they move in a cluster, and seem to form one entire little continent; sometimes they are dispersed into different quarters by the winds;

* See above, Letter 8. of this book, note.

† The credit of this account does not rest entirely upon our author: Pliny the elder mentions these floating islands, (l. 2. 95.) and so does Seneca, who accounts for them upon philosophical principles. (Q. N. l. 3. 25.) Varenus says, that in Honduras, a province in America, there is a lake in which are several little hills planted with shrubs, &c. tossed up and down by the winds. And he quotes Boethius, the Scots historian, who affirms, that, in a large *Loch*, called *Lomond Loch*, in Scotland, there is a floating island, upon which cattle graze. See VAREN, *Geog.* Vol. I. p. 412.

at other times, when it is calm, they float up and down separately. You may frequently see one of the larger islands sailing along with a lesser joined to it, like a ship with its long boat; or, perhaps, seeming to strive which shall out-swim the other: then again they all assemble in one station, and afterwards joining themselves to the shore, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, cause the lake to appear considerably less, till at last uniting in the centre, they restore it to its usual size. The sheep which graze upon the borders of this lake, frequently go upon these islands to feed, without perceiving that they have left the shore, till they are alarmed by finding themselves surrounded with water; and in the same manner, when the wind drives them back again, they return, without being sensible that they are landed. This lake empties itself into a river, which, after running a little way, sinks under ground; and if any thing is thrown in, brings it up again where the stream emerges. I have given you this account, because I imagined it would not be less new, nor less agreeable to you, than it was to me; as I know you take the same pleasure as myself, in contemplating the works of nature. Farewell.



LETTER XXI.

TO ARRIANUS.

Nothing, in my opinion, gives a more amiable and becoming grace to our studies, as well as manners, than to temper the serious with the gay, lest the former should degenerate into austere-ness, and the latter run up into levity. Upon this maxim it is, that I diversify my graver works with compositions of a lighter nature. I had chosen a convenient place and season for some productions of that sort to make their appearance in; and designing to accustom them early to the tables of the idle, I fixed upon the month of July,* which is usually

* The months of July and August was a time of vacation to the Roman lawyers; the courts of justice being then shut up, that the farmers might not be interrupted in their harvest, by being obliged to attend their law-suits at Rome.

———— *messesque reversæ*

*Dimisere Forum; nec jam tibi turba reorum
Vestibulo, querulique rogant exire clientes;
Cessat centeni moderatrix judicis hasta.*

STATIUS Sylv. l. 4. 50.

Returning harvest bids contention cease,
And through the wrangling Forum all is peace;
No teasing clients now besiege thy way,
Nor judges sage the solemn spear display.

a time of vacation to the courts of justice, in order to read them to some of my friends at supper: and, accordingly, I placed a desk before each couch. † But as I happened that morning to be unexpectedly called away to attend a cause, I took occasion to preface my recital with an apology. I entreated my audience not to impute it to me as any want of due regard for the business to which I had invited them, that, on the very day I had appointed to read my performances to some of my friends, (though indeed but few,) I did not refuse my good offices to others in their law-affairs. I assured them, I would observe the same rule in my writings, and should always give the preference to matters of importance, before those of entertainment; to serious engagements, before amusing ones; and to the business of my friends, before my own. The poems I recited consisted of a variety of subjects in different measures. It is by such arts as these, we, who dare not rely upon the single force of our genius, endeavour to avoid satiating our readers. In compliance with the ear-

Nevertheless the courts, as appears from this letter, were sometimes opened during this season of vacation, upon cases, perhaps, of particular emergency.

† The ancient Romans lay extended upon couches during their suppers, which were always in the evening, that time being the general hour of their principal meal.

nest solicitation of my audience, I recited during two days successively ; but not in the manner that several practise, by making a merit of passing over the less shining passages ; on the contrary, I omitted nothing, and freely confessed it. I read the whole, that I might correct the whole ; which it is impossible those, who only select particular passages, should do. The latter method, indeed, may have more the appearance of modesty, and perhaps respect ; but the former shows a greater ingenuousness, as well as a more affectionate disposition towards the audience. For, the belief that a man's friends have so much regard to him, as not to be weary upon these occasions, is a sure indication of the love he bears them. To say the truth, one has little obligation to an audience, if they assemble merely with a view to their own entertainment. He, who had rather find his friend's performance correct than make it so, is to be considered as a stranger, or one who is too indolent to give himself any trouble. Your friendship for me leaves me no room to doubt, that you are impatient to read my book, even in its present very imperfect state ; and so you shall, but not till I have made those corrections, which were the principal inducement of my recital. You are already acquainted with some parts of it ; but even those, after they shall have been polished, (or, perhaps,

spoiled, as is sometimes the case by too frequent revisals) will seem new to you. For, when a composition has undergone various changes, it acquires an air of novelty, even in those very parts which remain unaltered. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO GEMINITUS.

HAVE you never observed a sort of people, who, though they are themselves the abject slaves of every vice, show a kind of malicious indignation against the immoral conduct of others; and are most severe to those whom they most resemble? yet, surely, a lenity of disposition, even in persons who have the least occasion for clemency themselves, is, of all virtues, the most becoming. The highest of characters, in my estimation, is *his*, who is as ready to pardon the moral errors of mankind, as if he were every day guilty of some himself; and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault, as if he never forgave one. It is a rule, then, which we should upon all occasions, both private and public, most religiously observe, “to be inexorable to our own failings, while we treat those of the rest of the world with tenderness, not excepting even those who forgive none but themselves;” remembering always what the humane,

and, *therefore*, as well as upon other accounts, the *great* Thræsea used frequently to say: "He who *"hates vice hates mankind."** You will ask me, perhaps, who it is that has given occasion to these reflections? You must know a certain person lately—but of that when we meet,—though, upon second thoughts, not even *then*, lest, whilst I condemn and expose *his* conduct, I should act counter to that maxim I particularly recommend. Whoever, therefore, and whatever he is, shall remain in silence: for, though there may be some use, perhaps, in setting a mark upon the man, for the sake of example, there will be more, however, in sparing him, for the sake of humanity. Farewell.

* The meaning of this maxim seems to be, that, as it is extremely difficult to separate the action from the man, we should not suffer the errors of the world to raise in us that acrimony of indignation, which, if well examined, perhaps, will be oftener found to proceed from some secret principle of malice, than a just abhorrence of vice; "*Satius est* (as "*Seneca observes*) *publicos mores et humana vitia, placide accipere*:" a general philanthropy, and universal benevolence, being the most genuine marks, by which virtue distinguishes those who are truly in her interest.—If this sense be admitted, there is no need to suppose, (with some of the commentators,) that any mistake has crept into the text.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MARCELLINUS.

THE deep concern I am under for the death of Junius Avitus has rendered me incapable either of business, study, or amusement. He was invested with the laticlave † in my house; as in all the honours he solicited, he was constantly assisted by my interest. I will add, too, his affection and esteem for me were so great, that he formed his manners, and regulated his conduct, by my guidance and direction: a disposition extremely uncommon in the youth of this age; for, who among them will now deign to submit to the experience and authority of their superiors? They think themselves at once in full possession of all wisdom and knowledge; and without revering or imitating the virtues of any, imagine they are a sufficient example to themselves. But Avitus was of a far different turn; he showed his wisdom, in believing there were some who had more; and discovered his knowledge, in his desire to learn. He was ever consulting his friends upon some point relating to his studies, or his conduct; and he always returned from them with advantage, either by the advice

† See Vol. I. Book ii. Letter 9. note.

he received, or the disposition he showed. With what respect did he treat Servianus, one of the most accomplished men of the age! Avitus knew how to value such uncommon merit, as well as to endear himself to him in his turn. Accordingly, when Servianus went lieutenant from Germany into Pannonia,* he attended him as tribune; not so much in the character of his fellow-soldier, as of his friend and admirer. With what care and integrity did he execute the office of quæstor under several consuls, who all esteemed him, not only as an useful and experienced officer, but as an easy and agreeable companion! With what zeal and application did he solicit this very ædileship,† from the enjoyment of which he is now prematurely snatched! a reflection that gives a peculiar poignancy to my affliction for the loss of him. His unavailing labours, his fruitless assiduities, and

* A very extensive province, comprehending part of Austria, Hungary, &c.

† The ædiles were, at first, two officers chosen out of the body of the commons, in order to assist the tribunes in the discharge of some particular parts of their functions, the chief of which was the care of public edifices. Others were afterwards elected out of the nobility, to inspect public games, determine causes relating to the selling or exchanging of estates, to supervise the public stores of corn, and other provisions, &c.—KEN. *Antiq.* p. 116, 117.

the honour which he merited only, not enjoyed, are for ever in my thoughts. The circumstance of his having first put on the laticlave under my roof; the first and the last suffrage I ever gave him; the conversations we have had, and the consultations we have held, all return fresh upon my mind. I am struck with the most tender sorrow when I consider his youth, and reflect upon the irreparable loss his family has sustained: an aged parent; a young wife, to whom he had not been married much above a year; an infant daughter, just born; so many pleasing hopes, so many tender joys, all reversed and destroyed in one day! When he was just elected ædile; when he had lately commenced a bridegroom; when he was newly made a father—he was suddenly snatched from the midst of these satisfactions; and has left behind him an honour untasted, a mother inconsolable, a widowed wife, and an orphan infant, who will have the misfortune of never having known her father! But what increases my tears upon this melancholy occasion is, that, being absent when this accident happened, I never knew of his sickness, till I heard of his death; and had no time to prepare myself for this cruel stroke, by previously apprehending it! Such is the present distress of my mind! You must not wonder, then, that it is the whole subject of my letter; for I am not able, at present, to think or talk of any thing else. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

THE friendship I profess for you, induces me, not indeed to direct (for you are far above the want of a guide) but to remind you, however, of what you already know, and to admonish you carefully to observe, and firmly to put it in practice; in other words, to know it to all the more useful purposes of knowledge. You will consider yourself as sent to that noble province, Achaia, the real and genuine Greece, where politeness, learning, and even agriculture itself, are supposed to have taken their first rise; as sent to govern a state composed of free cities; that is, to a society of men who breathe the spirit of true manhood and liberty,* who maintained the rights they re-

* “ It is remarkable, that even after Greece was absorbed
“ in the Roman empire, and became a province to it under
“ the name of Achaia, it did not lose, with its power and
“ sovereignty, that lively sense and love of liberty, which
“ was the peculiar character of that people, amongst whom
“ the arts were produced, and brought to perfection. The
“ Romans, when they had subdued Greece, left that gene-
“ rous, brave, polite people, in possession of many of their
“ rights and privileges. And they maintained such an ardent
“ zeal for liberty, that, to name no other instances of it,
“ when the civil wars happened in Italy, the Athenians

ceived from nature, by courage, by virtue, by alliances; in a word, by civil and religious faith.

“very warmly espoused the part of Pompey, who fought
“for the republic; and after Cæsar was killed, they erected
“statues in honour of Brutus and Cassius, near to those of
“Harmodius and Aristogiton, their ancient deliverers. It
“was hence Greece, Athens in particular, after it was very
“much fallen and degenerated, continued still to be the
“metropolis of sciences, the school of all the fine arts, the
“standard and centre of good taste in all works of genius,
“to Cicero’s time, and long afterwards; insomuch, that
“Rome sent its most illustrious youth to be perfected there
“in polite literature, eloquence, philosophy, and all the in-
“genious arts and sciences; and the emperors who loved
“learning, if they could not go to Greece, and become
“scholars there, as some of them did, brought Greece to
“them, by inviting and receiving into their palaces its most
“celebrated professors and artists, and even entrusting the
“education of their children with Greek masters. Now,
“their continuing to excel in the arts and sciences, to what
“else can it be attributed, but to this, that, with some small
“remains of liberty, they retained the spirit of liberty, the
“love of it, and zeal for it? It was, indeed, in consequence
“of this alone, that they maintained, in some degree, even
“till Italy was quite over-run with barbarism, a sovereignty
“the Romans could not take from them; a sovereignty in
“science, arts, and good taste. ’Tis impossible to account
“for it in any other way: they preserved the arts in a very
“great degree, because they retained the spirit of liberty in
“a very extraordinary one.”—TURNBULL on *Ancient Paint-
ing*, p. 100.

Revere the gods and heroes their founders; the glory of their ancient days; and even that very antiquity itself; for age, as it is venerable in men, is in states sacred. Honour them, therefore, for their deeds of old renown; for those which true, and (I do not scruple to add) which fabulous, history has recorded. Indulge them in the full exercise of their dignities, their privileges, and their very vanity. Remember, it was from this nation we derived our laws;† that she did not receive ours by conquest, but gave us her own in consequence of our particular request. Remember, it is Athens that you approach; it is Lacedemon you govern: and to deprive so renowned a people of the declining shadow, the remaining name of liberty, would be a hardship, would be even a barbarity of the severest kind. Physicians, you see,

† About the year of Rome 300, that is, 452 years before Christ, ambassadors were sent into Greece, to make a collection of such laws and customs, as the wisdom of that polite people had established, particularly the famous ones of Solon. At their return, these laws were approved and confirmed, and, together with some additional ones, were engraven on ten tables of brass. Two other tables of laws were soon afterwards added to these, which, together with the former, went by the name of the *twelve tables*, and were looked upon as the fountain of all law, public and private. LIV. l. 3. c. 31. FERRIERE *Hist. des Loix*, civ. c. 5.

though with respect to diseases there is no difference between the free and the slave, yet treat persons of the former rank with more tenderness than those of the latter. Reflect on the illustrious figure these cities once made; but so reflect, as not to despise them for what they now are. Far be pride and asperity from my friend; nor fear, by a proper condescension, to lay yourself open to contempt. Can he, who is vested with the power and bears the ensigns of authority, can *he* fail of meeting with respect, unless by pursuing base and sordid measures, and first breaking through that awful reverence he owes to himself? Ill, believe me, is power proved by insult; ill can terror command veneration; and far more efficacious is affection in obtaining one's purpose than fear. For terror operates no longer than its object is present, but love produces its effects when the object is at a distance: and as absence changes the former into hatred, it raises the latter into respect. It behoves you, therefore, (and I cannot repeat it too often,) it behoves you well to consider the end of your office, and to represent to yourself how great and important is the administration of governing a free state. For, what is more becoming our social nature than well regulated government, or more valuable than liberty? How ignominious, then, must his conduct be, who turns the first into

anarchy, and the last into slavery. To these considerations, let me add, that you have an established reputation to maintain: the fame you acquired by the function of the quæstorship in Bythinia; † the good opinion of the emperor; the credit you obtained when you were tribune and prætor; in a word, this very government, which may be looked upon as the reward of your former services; are so many glorious weights which are incumbent upon you to support with suitable dignity. The more earnestly, therefore, ought you to endeavour, that it may not be said you showed greater urbanity, integrity, and ability, in a rude province, remote from Rome, than in one which lies so much nearer to the capital; in the midst of a nation of slaves, than among a free people; that it may not be remarked, that it was chance, and not judgment, appointed you to this office; when your character was unknown and unexperienced, not tried and approved. For, it is a maxim, which your reading and conversation must have often suggested to you, that it is a far greater disgrace to lose the fame one has once attained, than never to have acquired it. I again beg you to be persuaded, that I do not write this letter as presuming to instruct, but to remind you. Though, indeed, if I had, it would

† A province in Anatolia, or Asia the Less.

have only been in consequence of the great affection I bear you ; a sentiment which I am in no apprehension of carrying beyond its just limits ; for, there can be no danger of excess where one cannot love too well. Farewell.

THE
L E T T E R S
OF
PLINY.

BOOK NINTH.

LETTER I.

TO MAXIMUS.

I HAVE frequently advised you, to be as expeditious as possible in publishing what you have written, either in defence of yourself, or against Planta; or rather, indeed, (as the circumstances of the case demanded,) what you drew up with both those views; but I particularly press this advice upon you *now* that I hear he is dead. For though you read this piece to several of your friends, and put it into the hands of others, yet I should be

extremely sorry, that the world should suspect you did not venture to compose, till after his death, what it is most certain you had finished during his life. Let not the character my friend has acquired of firmness and resolution be called in question; as it will not, when both the candid and the malicious world shall know, that the death of your adversary did not give you the confidence of writing, but only anticipated the opportunity of publishing this piece. Thus you will avoid the imputation,

With coward joy to triumph o'er the dead : *

For what you wrote, and actually recited before his death, will be considered as published during his life, provided you publish it soon. If, therefore, you have any other work upon your hands, let me intreat you to lay it aside, and give your last finishing touches to this performance. It seemed to me, indeed, when I formerly read it, to want no improvements; and so it ought to seem now to you, as neither the subject requires, nor the time will admit, of longer delay. Farewell.

* Hom. Od. lib. 22.

LETTER II.

TO SABINUS.

YOUR request that I would write to you frequent and long letters, is very pleasing to me. If I have forborne to do so, it is partly in consideration of the important affairs in which you are employed; and partly from some very cold and uninteresting occupations of my own, which engage my thoughts, and damp my imagination. Besides, I have not a sufficient supply of matter for frequent letters; and am by no means in the same situation that Tully was, whom you point out to me as an example. He not only possessed a most enlarged genius, but the circumstances of the times wherein he lived, furnished him with a variety of noble occasions of exercising it. As for myself, you know (without my telling you) to what narrow limits I am confined, unless my letters were to turn upon the fictitious and pedantic topics of the schools. But when I consider you in the midst of arms and encampments, animated by martial music, or fatigued with toil and heat; how absurd would it to be to talk to you upon such subjects? This is my apology, and I think it a reasonable one; however, I almost wish you would not accept it: for to reject the excuses of a friend, upon

such an occasion, be they ever so just, is an evident proof of a warm affection. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO PAULINUS.

MANKIND differ in their notions of supreme happiness; but in my opinion he truly possesses it, who lives in the conscious anticipation of honest fame, and the glorious figure he shall make in the eyes of posterity. I confess, if I had not the reward of an immortal reputation in view, I should prefer a life of uninterrupted ease and indolent retirement to any other. There seem to be but two points worthy our attention; endless fame, or the short duration of human life. Those who are actuated by the former motive, must labour to attain it with the utmost exertion of their powers; while such as are influenced by the latter, should quietly resign themselves to repose, nor wear out a short life, as many we see do, in a painful course of ill-directed pursuits, and then sink at last into a total dissatisfaction both of themselves and of the world. These are my daily reflections, and I communicate them to you, in order to renounce them, if you should not join with me in the same sentiments; as undoubtedly you will, who are ever meditating some worthy deed to render your name immortal. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO MACRINUS.

I SHOULD fear you would think the oration, which you receive with this letter, immoderately long, if it were not of such a nature as to require being divided into several sections; which, consisting of distinct charges, have the appearance of so many separate speeches. Wherever, therefore, you begin or end, you may consider what follows, either as connected with what precedes, or making of itself a new subject; so that you may look upon it as very diffuse upon the whole, and yet as extremely concise with respect to its particular parts. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO TIRO.

You are greatly to be applauded for the just manner with which, as I am informed, (and I make very strict enquiry,) you administer the government of your province; one principal branch of which is to distinguish merit in every degree, and so to gain the love of the lower rank, as to preserve, at the same time, the affection of their superiors. But it is an error many have fallen into, that

while they endeavour to avoid the appearance of favouring the great, they run into the contrary extreme, and incur the imputation of acting with ill manners or ill nature; an error which you are far from committing, I well know. However, I cannot forbear adding a caution to my praise, and recommending it to you, to conduct yourself in such a manner, as to preserve the proper distinction of rank and dignity. For, to level and confound the different orders of society is far from producing an equality among mankind; it is, in fact, the most unequal thing imaginable. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO CALVISIUS.

I HAVE spent these several last days in my study, with the most pleasing tranquillity. You will ask, how that can be possible in the midst of Rome? It happened to be the season of celebrating the Circensian games; * an entertainment for which I have not the least taste. They have no novelty, no variety to recommend them; nothing, in short,

* These games were originally of Grecian extraction, but first introduced among the Romans by Romulus, in order to favour his design of carrying off the Sabine virgins: they consisted of horse and chariot races, &c.

one would wish to be present at twice. It is the more surprising, therefore, that so many thousand people should be possessed with the childish passion of desiring often to see a parcel of horses gallop, and men standing erect in their chariots. If, indeed, it were the swiftness of the horses, or the skill of the charioteers, that attracted them, there might be some little pretence of reason on their side. But it is the *dress* they favour; † it is the dress that captivates them. And if, in the midst of the course, the different contenders were to change habits, their different partizans would change sides, and instantly desert the very same men and horses whom they just before were eagerly following, with their eyes, as far as they could see, and shouting their names with all the warmth of vociferous exclamation. Such mighty charms, such wonderous power is there in the colour of a paltry

† The performers at these games were divided into companies, distinguished by the particular colour of their habits; the principal of which were the white, the red, the blue, and the green. Accordingly, the spectators favoured one or the other colour, as humour and caprice inclined them. In the reign of Justinian, a tumult arose in Constantinople, occasioned merely by a contention among the partizans of these several colours, wherein no less than 30,000 men lost their lives.—*PROTOP. de Bell. Persic. l. 1.*

tunic ! and this in the sentiments, not only of the vulgar, (more contemptible than the uniform they espouse,) but even in the opinion of some grave personages. When I observe such men thus insatiably fond of so silly, so low, so uninteresting, so common an entertainment, I congratulate myself that I am insensible to these pleasures ; and am glad to employ the leisure of this season upon my studies, which others throw away upon the most idle occupations. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO ROMANUS.

I AM glad to find, by your letter, that you are engaged in building ; for I may now defend my own conduct by your example. I am myself occupied in the same sort of work ; and since I have you on my side, who shall deny I have reason too ? We are pretty much agreed, likewise, I find, in our situations ; and as your buildings are carrying on upon the sea-coast, mine are rising upon the side of the Larian lake. I have several villas upon the borders of this lake, but there are two particularly, in which I take most delight, so they give me most employment. They are both situated

like those at Baiæ: * one of them stands upon a rock, and has a prospect of the lake; the other

* Now called Castello di Baia, in Terra di Lavoro. It was the place the Romans chose for their winter retreat, and which they frequented upon account of its warm baths. Some few ruins of the beautiful villas that once covered this delightful coast still remain; and nothing can give one a higher idea of the prodigious expence and magnificence of the Romans, in their private buildings, than the manner in which some of these were situated. It appears, from this letter, as well as from several other passages in the classic writers, that they actually projected into the sea, being erected upon vast piles sunk for that purpose. Virgil draws a beautiful simile from this custom, where he compares the massy spear which Turnus hurled at Bitias, to one of those enormous piles thrown into the Baian sea:

*Qualis in Euboico Baiarum littore quondam
Saxea pila cadit, magnis quam molibus ante
Constructum jaciunt ponto; sic illa ruinam
Prona trahit penitusque vadis illisa recumbit:
Miscent se maria, et nigræ attolluntur arenæ.*

Æn. ix. 710.

So from the Baian mole, whose structures rise
High o'er the flood, a massy fragment flies;
The rapid rolling pile all headlong sweeps
With one vast length of ruin to the deeps;
Thick boil the billows, and on every side
Work the dark sands, and blacken all the tide.

PITT.

actually touches it. The first, supported as it were

Horace, also, in one of his moral odes, points out and exposes this amazing luxury of building :

Tu secunda marmora

Locas sub ipsum funus ; et sepulcri

Immemor, struis domos ;

Marisque Baiis obstrepentis urges

Summovere littora,

Parum locuples continente ripa.

Od. 18. l. 2.

—You, with thoughtless pride elate,
Unconscious of impending fate,
Command the pillared dome to rise,
When lo ! thy tomb forgotten lies ;
And though the waves indignant roar,
Forward you urge the Baian shore,
While earth's too narrow bounds in vain
Thy guilty progress would restrain.

MR FRANCIS.

And here, indeed, luxury seems to have reigned in her most licentious refinements of all kinds ; while the principal amusement of the place consisted in sailing upon the gulph in gaily painted barks, accompanied with all the melting softness that exquisite wines, fine women, and rapturous music could inspire. There was something even in the natural, as well as artificial turn of the scene, which seemed formed to dissolve the mind into a state of softness and dissipation ; insomuch, that Seneca, with all his stoical fortitude, durst not trust himself in it above a day. See SENECA, *Ep.* 51.

by the lofty buskin, † I call my *tragic*: the other, as resting upon the humble sock, my *comic* villa. They have each their particular beauties, which recommend themselves to me so much the more, as they are of different kinds. The former commands a wider prospect of the lake; the latter enjoys a nearer view of it. *This*, by an easy bend, embraces a little bay; the promontory upon which the *other* stands forms two. *Here* you have a straight walk, extending itself along the banks of the lake; *there*, a spacious terrace that falls by a gentle descent towards it. The former does not feel the force of the waves; the latter breaks them: from *that* you see the fishing vessels below; from *this* you may fish yourself, and throw your line from your chamber, and almost from your bed, as from a boat. It is the beauties, therefore, these agreeable villas possess, that tempt me to add to them those which are wanting. But I need not assign a reason to you; who, undoubtedly, will think it a sufficient one that I follow your example. Farewell.

† The buskin was a kind of high shoe worn upon the stage by the actors of tragedy, in order to give them a more heroic elevation of stature; as the sock was something between a shoe and slipper, and appropriated to the comic players.

LETTER VIII.


TO AUGURINUS.

WERE I to bestow praise on *you*, from whom I have received so much, I am afraid it would seem to proceed, not so much from my judgment, as my gratitude. Nevertheless, I will not scruple to say, that I think all your productions are beautiful; especially, you may be sure, those of which I am the subject. And the same reason will account both for their deserving that character, and for my thinking so; for as, on the one hand, you ever succeed best when friendship inspires you, so, on the other, I always like most what flatters my vanity. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO COLO.

I GREATLY admire the generous grief you express for the death of Pompeius Quinctianus, as it is a proof, that your affection for your departed friend does not terminate with his life. Far different from those who love, or rather, I should more properly say, who counterfeit love to none but the living. Nor indeed even *that* any longer, than they are the favourites of fortune; for the unhappy are



no more the object of their remembrance than the dead. But *your* friendship is raised upon a more lasting foundation, and the constancy of your affection can only end with your life. Quinctianus, most certainly, well deserved to meet with that generous warmth from his friends, of which he was himself so bright an example. He loved them in prosperity; protected them in adversity; lamented them in death. How open was his countenance! how modest his conversation! how equally did he temper gravity with gaiety! how fond was he of learning! how judicious his sentiments! how dutiful to a father of a very different character! and how happily did he reconcile filial piety to inflexible virtue, continuing a good son, without forfeiting the title of a good man! But why do I aggravate your affliction by reminding you of his merit? Yet I know your affection for the memory of this excellent youth is so strong, that you had rather endure that pain, than suffer his virtues to be passed over in silence; especially by me, whose applause, you imagine, will adorn his actions, extend his fame, and restore him, as it were, to that life from which he is prematurely snatched. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO TACITUS. *

I SHOULD be glad to follow your precepts; but there is such a scarcity of boars, that it is impossible to pay, at the same time, equal homage to Minerva and Diana, who, you think, ought to be jointly worshipped. I must content myself, therefore, with offering my single devotion to the former; and even *that* with some restriction, considering the heats of the season, and the privileged indolence of retirement. I composed, indeed, a few trifles in

* The learned Catanaeus, with some other commentators, imagines this letter does not belong to Pliny, but is the answer of Tacitus to the 6th epistle of the first book. He supports this conjecture, indeed, by no authority; only thinks, it falls in exactly with the letter to which he supposes it an answer, and fancies he discovers something in the style different from our author's manner. But, upon a comparison of the two letters, there seems little reason to believe one is an answer to the other. And as to any difference of *style*, (if there really be any, which the translator confesses he has not penetration enough to discover,) it is much too precarious an argument to have any weight in the case. The supposition of Casaubon seems more probable, who thinks this epistle might be occasioned by one from Tacitus, wherein he reminded Pliny of his own advice to him, in that letter to which Catanaeus imagines this to be an answer.

my journey hither, which are only worthy of being destroyed, as they are written with the same careless unstudied manner that one usually chats upon the road. Since I came to my villa, I have made some few additions to them, not finding myself in a humour to turn my thoughts to things of more consequence. Thus my poems, which you suppose I am finishing with so much advantage amidst the silence and solemnity of woods and groves, are, in truth, wholly at a stand. But I have revised an oration or two; though that kind of business is so unpleasant, as rather to resemble rustic labours, than rural amusements. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO GEMINUS.

Your letter was particularly acceptable to me, as it mentioned your desire that I would send you something of mine, addressed to you, to insert in your works. I shall find an occasion of complying with your request more proper than that which you propose; the subject you point out to me being attended with some objections; and when you consider it again, you will think so. As I did not imagine there were any booksellers at Lugdunum, * I

* Lyons, in the Lyonois, a province of France.

am so much the more pleased to learn that my works are sold there. I rejoice to find they maintain the same character abroad, which they raised at home ; and I begin to flatter myself they have some merit, since persons of such distant countries are agreed in their opinion concerning them. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO JUNIOR.

A CERTAIN friend of mine lately chastised his son, in my presence, for being somewhat too expensive in the article of dogs and horses. "And pray," I asked him, when the youth was withdrawn, "did you never commit a fault yourself which deserved your father's correction? Are you not sometimes, even now, guilty of errors, which your son, were he in your place, might with equal gravity reprove? Are not all mankind subject to indiscretions? And have we not each of us our particular follies in which we fondly indulge ourselves?"

The great affection I have for you, induced me to set this instance of unreasonable severity before you, as a caution not to treat your son with too much rigour and austerity. Consider, he is but a boy, and that there was a time when you were of

the same age. In exerting, therefore, the authority of a father, remember always that you are a man, and the parent of a man. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO QUADRATUS.

THE pleasure and attention with which you perused the vindication I published of Helvidius,* has greatly raised your curiosity, it seems, to be informed of those particulars, relating to that affair, which are not mentioned in the defence; as you were too young to be present yourself at that transaction. When Domitian was assassinated, a glorious opportunity, I thought, offered itself, of pursuing the guilty, vindicating the injured, and advancing my own reputation. But, amidst an infinite variety of the blackest crimes, none appeared to me more atrocious, than that a senator, of prætorian dignity, and invested with the sacred character of a judge, should, even in the very senate itself, lay violent hands upon a member† of that august assembly; upon one who formerly had the

* He was accused of treason, under pretence that, in a dramatic piece which he composed, he had, in the characters of Paris and Oenone, reflected upon Domitian for divorcing his wife Domitia.—*Suet. in vit. Domit. cap. 10.*

† Helvidius.

honour of being consul, and who then stood arraigned before him. Besides this general consideration, I had, likewise, a particular intimacy with Helvidius, as far as it was possible to hold with one, who, fearing the tyranny of the times, endeavoured to veil the lustre of his fame, and his virtues, in obscurity and retirement. Arria likewise, and her daughter Fannia, who was mother-in-law to Helvidius, were in the number of my friends. But it was not so much private attachments, as the honour of the public, a just indignation at the action, and the danger of the example if it should pass unpunished, that animated me upon this occasion. At the first restoration of liberty,* every man singled out his particular enemy, (though, it must be confessed, those only of a lower rank,) and, in the midst of much clamour and confusion, no sooner brought the charge, than procured the condemnation. But, for myself, I thought it would have more the appearance of moderation, as well as spirit, not to take advantage of the general resentment of the public, but to crush this criminal with the single weight of his own enormous guilt. When, therefore, the first heat of public indignation began to cool, and declining passion gave way to justice, though I was at that time under great affliction for

* Upon the accession of Nerva to the empire, after the death of Domitian.

the loss of my wife,* I sent to Anteia, the widow of Helvidius, and desired her to come to me, as my late misfortune prevented me from appearing in public. When she arrived, I acquainted her with my intention not to suffer the injuries her husband had received to pass unrevenged; and desired her to consult with Arria and Fannia, (who were just returned from exile,) whether she and they would join with me in the prosecution? Not that I wanted, I said, an associate, but that I was not so jealous of my own glory, as to refuse to share it with them in this affair. She accordingly communicated this message to them, and they all agreed to the proposal without the least hesitation. It happened very opportunely, that the senate was to meet within three days. It was a general rule with me, to consult, in all my affairs, with Corellius, a person of the greatest prudence and wisdom this age has produced. However, in the present case, I relied entirely upon my own discretion, being apprehensive he would not approve of my design, as he was of a very indecisive and cautious temper. But although I did not previously deliberate with him, (experience having taught me, never to advise with

* Our author's first wife; of whom we have no particular account. After her death, he married his favourite Calpurnia.

a person concerning a question we have already determined, where he has a right to expect that one shall be decided by his judgment,) yet I could not forbear acquainting him with my resolution, at the time I proposed to carry it into execution. The senate being assembled, I came into the house, and begged I might have leave to make a motion; which I accordingly did in few words, and with general assent. When I began to touch upon the charge, and point out the person I intended to accuse, (though as yet without mentioning him by name,) I was attacked on all sides. "Let us know," says one, "who is the object of this extraordinary motion?" "Who is it," asked another, "that is thus accused, without acquainting the house with his name and his crime?" "Surely," added a third, "we, who have escaped the late dangerous times, may expect now, at least, to remain in security." I heard all this with great calmness, and without being in the least alarmed;—such is the effect of conscious integrity; and so much difference is there with respect to inspiring confidence or fear, whether the world had only rather one should forbear a certain act, or absolutely condemn it. It would be too tedious to relate all that was advanced, by different parties, upon this occasion. At length the consul acquainted me, that I was at liberty to propose what I thought proper, when

my turn should come to give my opinion upon the order of the day. * I thanked him for allowing me a liberty, which he never yet, I said, refused to any; and so sat down: when immediately the house went upon other business. In the mean while, one of my consular friends took me aside, and, with great earnestness, telling me, he thought I had proceeded in this matter with more courage than prudence, used every method of reproof and persuasion, to prevail with me to desist; adding, at the same time, that I should certainly, if I persevered, render myself obnoxious to some future prince. "And so be it," I returned, "should he prove a bad one." He had scarce left me, when a second came up: "For God's sake," said he, "what are you attempting? Why will you ruin yourself? Do you consider to what hazards you are exposed? Why will you presume too much on the present situation of public affairs, when it is so uncertain what turn they may hereafter take? You are attacking a man who is actually at the head of the treasury, and will shortly be

* It is very remarkable, that when any senator was asked his opinion in the house, concerning the business in agitation, he had the privilege of speaking as long as he pleased upon any other affair, before he delivered his sentiments on the point in question.—*Aul. Gell. lib. iv. cap. 10.*

" consul. Besides, do you consider what credit he
" has, and with what powerful friendships he is sup-
" ported?" Upon which he named a certain person,
who (not without several unfavourable rumours)†
was then at the head of a powerful army in the
East. I replied,

" All I've foreseen, and oft in thought revolved, ‡

" and am willing, if fate shall so decree, to suffer
" by acting an honourable part, provided I can
" draw vengeance down upon a most infamous
" one." The time for the members to give their
respective opinions was now arrived. Domitius
Apollinaris, the consul elect, spoke first; after him,
Fabricius Veiento; then Fabius Posthumius; Vec-
tius Proculus next, (who married my wife's mother,
and who was colleague of Publicius Certus, the per-
son on whom the debate turned,) and, last of all,
Ammius Flaccus. They all defended Certus, as if
I had already accused him, (though I had not yet
so much as once mentioned his name,) and enter-
ed upon his justification, as if I had exhibited a spe-

† Probably concerning his intentions to employ his credit
with the army, to be proclaimed emperor either immediate-
ly, or on the death of Nerva.

‡ *Æneid*. lib. 6. v. 105.

cific charge. It is not necessary to repeat, in this place, what they respectively said, having related it in their words, in the speech above-mentioned. Avidius Quietus, and Cornutus Tertullius, answered them. The former observed, "that it was extremely unjust not to hear the complaints of those who thought themselves injured; and, therefore, that Arria and Fannia ought not to be denied the privilege of laying their grievances before the house; and that the point for the consideration of the senate, was not the rank of the person, but the merit of the cause." Then Cornutus rose up, and acquainted the house, "That, as he was appointed guardian to the daughter of Helvidius, by the consuls, upon the petition of her mother and her father-in-law, he thought himself obliged to fulfil the duty of his trust; in the execution of which, however, he would endeavour to set some bounds to his indignation, by following that great example of moderation which those excellent women * had set, who contented themselves with barely informing the senate of the cruelties which Certus committed, in order to carry on his infamous adulation; and, therefore, he would only move, that if a punishment due to a crime so notoriously known, should be remitted, that,

* Arria and Fannia.

"at least, Certus might be branded with some
"mark of the displeasure of that august assembly."
Satrius Rufus spoke next, and, meaning to steer a
kind of middle course, expressed himself with
much ambiguity. "I am of opinion," said he,
"that great injustice will be done to Certus, if he
"is not acquitted, (for I do not scruple to mention
"his name, since the friends of Arria and Fannia,
"as well as his own, have done so too,) nor, indeed,
"have we any occasion to be solicitous upon this
"account. We, who think well of the man, shall
"judge him with the same impartiality as the rest;
"but if he is innocent, as I hope he is, and shall
"be glad to find, I think this house may very
"justly deny the present motion, till some charge
"shall be proved against him." Thus, according
to the respective order in which they were called
upon,* they delivered their several opinions. When
it came to my turn, I rose up, and using the same
introduction to my speech as I have published in
the defence, I replied to them severally. It is

* In the early times of the republic, the consul began by asking the opinion of the *prince* of the senate, and the rest went on, each according to his age. Under the emperors, their will served as a rule; for, as the prince presided in the senate, he demanded the opinion of him first, whom he thought fit to do that honour: however, he more usually began with the consuls.

surprising with what an universal assent I was heard, even by those who, just before, were loudest against me: such a wonderful change was wrought, either by the importance of the affair, the eloquence of the speech, or the resolution of the advocate. After I had finished, Veiento attempted to reply; but the general clamour not permitting him to proceed, "I hope, conscript fathers," † said he, "you will not oblige me to implore the assistance of the tribunes." ‡ Immediately the tribune Murena cried out, "You have my leave, most illustrious Veiento, to go on." But still the clamour was renewed. In the interval, the consul ordered the house to divide, and, having counted the voices, dismissed the senate, leaving Veiento in the midst, still attempting to speak. He made great complaints of this affront, (as he called it,) applying the following lines of Homer to himself:

Great perils, father, wait the unequal fight;
Those younger champions will thy strength o'ercome. §

† The appellation by which the senate was addressed.

‡ The tribunes were magistrates chosen at first out of the body of the commons, for the defence of their liberties, and to interpose in all grievances offered by their superiors. Their authority extended even to the deliberations of the senate.

§ Diomed's speech to Nestor, advising him to retire from the field of battle. *Illiad*. iii. 102. *POPE*.

There was scarce a man in the senate that did not embrace and kiss me; and all strove who should applaud me most, for having, with the utmost hazard to myself, revived a custom so long disused, of freely consulting the senate upon affairs that concern the honour of the public: in a word, for having wiped off that reproach which was thrown upon it by the other orders in the state, "that the senators mutually favoured the members of their own body, while they were very severe in animadverting upon the rest of their fellow-citizens." All this was transacted in the absence of Certus, who kept out of the way, either because he suspected something of this nature was intended to be moved, or (as was said in his excuse) that he was really indisposed. Cæsar, however, did not refer the examination of this matter to the senate. But I succeeded, nevertheless, in my aim, another person being appointed instead of Certus to the consulship, while the election of his colleague to that office was confirmed. And thus, the wish with which I concluded my speech, was actually realized: "May he be obliged," said I, "to renounce under a virtuous prince,* that reward he received from an infamous one!"† Some time

* Nerva.

† Domitian; by whom he had been appointed consul elect, though he had not yet entered upon that office.

after, I recollected, as well as I could, the speech I delivered upon this occasion; to which I made some additions. It happened, (though, indeed, it had the appearance of being somewhat more than casual) that a few days after I had published this piece, Certus was taken ill and died. I was told, that his imagination continually represented me as a man that was pursuing him with a dagger. Whether there was any truth in this rumour, I will not venture to assert; but, for the sake of example, however, I wish it might gain credit. And now I have sent you a letter, which if you should think is as long as the defence you say you have read, you must impute it to yourself, for not being contented with such information as that piece could afford you. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO TACITUS.

THOUGH you are by no means inclined to self-admiration, yet, be assured, none of my writings are more sincerely the undissembled dictates of my real thoughts, than those of which you are the subject. Whether, indeed, posterity will concern herself with either of us, I know not; but surely we deserve some small regard at least, I will not say upon account of our geniuses (that would be

too vain a presumption,) but from our industry, our labours, and that high reverence we feel for her. Proceed we then, my friend, in the course we have entered, which, as it has conducted some to the brightest eminences of fame, so it has drawn forth many from silent obscurity into public notice and reputation. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO FALCO.

I RETIRED to my villa at Tuscum, with the hopes of passing my time here, at least, in my own way: but that is a privilege, I find, I am not to enjoy even here; so greatly am I interrupted with the importunate complaints and petitions of my tenants. I look over their accounts with more reluctance than I examine my own; for, to confess the truth, it is with great unwillingness I review even these. I am revising, however, some little orations; an employment which, after a length of time has intervened, is but of a very cold and unentertaining kind. In the mean while, my domestic affairs are neglected as much as if I were absent. Yet I sometimes so far act the part of a careful master of a family, as to mount my horse and ride about my farms, instead of taking my exercise in the

gestatio.* As for you, I hope you will keep up your good old custom, and, in return for this account of my rural occupations, let us country folk know what is going forward in town. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO MAMILIANUS.

It is no wonder the chace you mention afforded you infinite pleasure, since "the number of the slain (to use your own historical expression) was not to be counted."† As for myself, I have neither leisure nor inclination for sports of that kind: not leisure, because I am in the midst of my vintage; nor inclination, because it has proved an extreme bad one this season. However, I shall be able, I hope, to *draw off* some new verses, at least, if not new wine, for your entertainment, which, since you request them in so agreeable a manner, I will not fail to send you, as soon as they shall be thoroughly *settled*. Farewell.

* See Book I. Letter 3, note.

† An expression frequent among the historians in their description of battles.

LETTER XVII.

TO GENITOR.

I HAVE received your letter, in which you complain of being highly disgusted, lately, at a very splendid entertainment, by a set of buffoons, mummers, and wanton prostitutes, who were playing their antic tricks * round the tables. But let me

* These persons were introduced at most of the tables of the great, for the purposes of mirth and gaiety, and constituted an essential part in all polite entertainments among the Romans. It is surprising how soon this great people deviated from their original severity of manners, and were tainted with the contagion of foreign luxury. Livy dates the rise of this, and other unmanly delicacies, from the conquest of Scipio Asiaticus over Antiochus ; that is, when the republic had scarcely subsisted above a hundred and fourscore years. “ *Luxuriæ peregrinæ origo* (he observes) *exercitû* “ *Asiatico in urbem invecta est.*”—Liv. l. 39, c. 6. This triumphant army caught, it seems, the contaminating diversions of the people it subdued ; and, at its return to Rome, scattered infection among their countrymen, which spread, by slow degrees, till it effected their total destruction. Thus did eastern luxury revenge itself on Roman arms ! It may be wondered, that Pliny should keep his own temper, and check the indignation of his friends, at a scene which was fit only for the dissolute revels of the infamous Trimalchio. But it will not, perhaps, be doing justice to our author, to take an estimate of his real sentiments upon this point from

advise you to smooth your brow a little. It is true, I admit nothing of this kind at my own house; I endure them, however, without showing any dislike, when I meet with them in other people's. And why then," you will be ready to ask, "not have them yourself?" Because the gestures of the wanton, the pleasantries of the buffoon, or the extravagancies of the mummer, give me no pleasure, as they give me no surprise. It is my particular taste, you see, not my judgment, that I plead against them. And, indeed, what numbers

the letter before us.—Genitor, it seems, was a man of strict, but rather of too austere, morals for the free turn of the age: "*Emendatus et gravis: paulo etiam horridior et durior ut in hac licentia temporum.*"—Ep. 3. l. 3. But as there is a certain seasonable accommodation to the manners of the times, not only extremely consistent with, but highly conducive to, the interests of virtue, Pliny, probably, may affect a greater latitude than he in general approved, in order to draw off his friend from that stiffness and unyielding disposition, which might prejudice those of a gayer turn against him, and consequently lessen the beneficial influence of his virtues upon the world. A late most ingenious author, who has greatly distinguished himself in several branches of useful and polite literature, has given us a representation of one of these buffoons, from an antique in his collection; to which the reader is referred for a stronger idea of the vitiated and low taste of those, who could receive from them any gratification. See MIDDLETON, *Antiq.* tab. 9, fig. 2.

are there, who think the entertainments in which you and I most delight are no better than impertinent follies? How many are there, who, as soon as a reader, a lyrist, or a comedian is introduced, either withdraw from the company, or, if they remain, show as much dislike to this kind of diversions, as you did at those *monsters*, as you call them! Let us bear, therefore, my friend, with others in their amusements, that they, in return, may show indulgence to ours. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SABINUS.

WITH what care and attention you will read my works, and how perfectly treasure them in your memory, your letter is a sufficient proof. Do you consider, then, what trouble you are bringing upon your hands, when you kindly entice me, by every friendly artifice, to communicate to you as many of them as possible? I cannot, certainly, refuse your request; but shall comply with it, however, at different intervals, and observe some kind of regular succession. For, I would not, by too copious and too frequent a supply, over-burthen and confound a memory, to which I already owe so many acknowledgments; nor pour in upon it such a profusion at once, as to obliterate what it had before

retained, in order to make room for what succeeds.
Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO RUFO.

You have read, it seems, in a letter* of mine, that Virginius Rufus directed the following lines to be inscribed upon his tomb :

Here Rufus lies, who Vindex' arms withstood,
Not for himself, but for his country's good :

For which you blame him, and think Frontinus acted much more reasonably, in forbidding any monument whatsoever to be erected to his memory; and, in the conclusion of your letter, you desire my sentiments upon each. I loved them both; but I confess I admired *him* most whom you condemn; and admired him to such a degree, that, so far from imagining I ever should have occasion to become his advocate, I thought he could never be sufficiently applauded. In my opinion, every man who has acted a great and distinguished part, deserves, not only to be excused, but approved, if he endeavours to secure immortality to the fame he has merited, and is

* To Albinus; see Book VI. Letter 10.

desirous also to perpetuate an everlasting remembrance of himself, by monumental inscriptions. Yet rarely shall you find a man, who had performed such great achievements, so modestly reserved upon the subject of his own actions, as Virginius was. I can bear him witness, (and I had the happiness to enjoy his intimate friendship,) that I never but once heard him mention his own conduct; and that was, in giving an account of a conversation which passed between him and Cluvius: "You well know," said Cluvius to him, "the fidelity required in an historian; you will pardon me, therefore, I hope, if you should meet with any thing in my works, that is not agreeable to you." "O Cluvius," he replied, "can you be ignorant, that what I performed was in order that every man might enjoy the liberty of writing what he pleased?" But let us compare Frontinus with him in that very instance, wherein you think the former discovered a more modest and unostentatious disposition. He forbade a monument to be erected to him, it is true, but in what words? "The expence of a monument," says he, "is superfluous; the remembrance of me will remain, if my actions deserve it." Is there less vanity, do you think, thus to proclaim to all the world *

* It appears from hence, that this was not a testamentary direction, but a declaration in some work which Frontinus had published.

that his memory would remain, than to mark upon a single tomb-stone, in two lines, the actions one has performed? It is not, however, my design to condemn your favourite hero; I only mean to defend Virginius; and what argument can be more prevailing with you, than one drawn from a comparison between him and the person you prefer? In my own opinion, indeed, neither of them deserve to be condemned, since they both were animated with the same ardent passion for glory, although they pursued their object by different roads; the former, in desiring to receive those monumental honours he had merited; the latter, in seeming to despise them. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO VENATOR.

THE longer your letter was, so much the more agreeable I thought it; especially as it turned entirely upon my works. I am not at all surprised you should find a pleasure in them, since I know you have the same affection for every composition of mine, as you have for the author.

The getting in of my vintage, (which though it has proved but a slender one this season, is, however, more plentiful than I expected) particularly employs me at present. If, indeed, I can, with

any propriety, say so, who only gather a grape now and then, visit the wine-press, taste the must in the vat, and saunter to my domestics;* who being all engaged without doors, have wholly abandoned me to my readers and my secretaries. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO SABINIANUS.

YOUR freedman, whom you lately mentioned to me with displeasure, has been with me, and threw himself at my feet with as much submission as he could have fallen at yours. He earnestly requested me, with many tears, and even with all the eloquence of silent sorrow, to intercede for him; in short, he convinced me, by his whole behaviour, that he sincerely repents of his fault. I am persuaded he is thoroughly reformed, because he seems deeply sensible of his guilt. I know you are angry with him, and I know it is not without reason; but clemency can never exert itself more laudably than

* The distinction in the civil law between the *servi Urbani* & *Rustici*, is alluded to in the original; but as we have not the same among us, it is not possible, perhaps, to preserve this allusion, with propriety, in an English translation.

Compare with this Paul's letter to Philemon, interceding for a runaway slave.

when there is the most cause for resentment. You once had an affection for this man, and I hope will have again: in the mean while, let me only prevail with you to pardon him. If he should incur your displeasure hereafter, you will have so much the stronger plea in excuse for your anger, as you show yourself the more exorable to him now. Concede something to his youth, to his tears, and to your own natural mildness of temper; do not make him uneasy any longer, and I will add, too, do not make yourself so; for a man of your benevolence of heart cannot be angry without feeling great uneasiness. I am afraid, were I to join my entreaties with his, I should seem rather to compel, than to request you to forgive him. Yet I will not scruple even to unite mine with his; and in so much the stronger terms, as I have very sharply and severely reprov'd him, positively threatening never to interpose again in his behalf. But though it was proper to say this to him, in order to make him more fearful of offending, I do not say so to you. I may, perhaps, again have occasion to entreat you upon his account, and again obtain your forgiveness; supposing, I mean, his fault should be such as may become me to intercede, and you to pardon. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO SEVERUS.

I HAVE been much alarmed by the ill state of health of Passienus Paulus, as indeed I had many and just reasons. He has a most excellent and generous heart, of which I have the happiness to share the warmest friendship. In his writings he very successfully emulates the ancients, whose spirit and manner he has closely imitated, and happily restored; especially that of Propertius, to whom he is no less related by genius than by blood, as he particularly resembles that poet in his chief excellency. When you read his elegies, all that is elegant, tender, and pleasing, will conspire to charm you; and you will clearly discover they are animated with the congenial spirit of Propertius. He has lately made some attempts of the lyric kind, in which he as successfully copies the manner of Horace, as he has that of the other poet just mentioned. You would imagine, were there such a thing as kindred in genius, that the blood of Horace likewise flowed in his veins. He displays a most wonderful compass and pregnancy of imagination: when he describes the passion of love, you perceive his heart is entirely possessed by the most tender sentiments; when he paints the emo-

tions of grief, you see his breast is penetrated with the deepest sorrow; when he enters upon topics of panegyric, it is with all the ardour of the warmest benevolence; when he diverts himself with subjects of pleasantry, it is in the spirit of the most agreeable gaiety; in short, whatever kind of poetry he engages in, he executes it with such a masterly hand, that one would imagine it was the single species to which he had applied himself. The dangerous indisposition of such a friend and such a genius, occasioned as much anxiety to me, as it did pain to him. But at length *he* is recovered, and *my* peace is restored: an event which deserves your congratulation, not only for my sake, but for the sake of literature itself, which was exposed to as great a hazard by his danger, as it will receive glory by his recovery. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MAXIMUS.

It has frequently happened, when I have been pleading before the centumviri, that those venerable judges, after having preserved, as much as possible, the gravity and solemnity suitable to their character, have at length been forced, as it were, to break through all restraints, and have risen up, with one consent, in my applause. I have often,

likewise, gained as much glory in the senate as my utmost wishes could desire; but I never felt a more sensible pleasure, than by an account which I lately received from Cornelius Tacitus. He informed me, that, at the last Circensian games, he sat next to a certain person, who, after much discourse had passed between them, upon various points of erudition, asked him if he was an Italian or a provincial? Tacitus replied, "Your acquaintance with literature must have informed you who I am."—"Pray, then, is it Tacitus or Pliny I am talking with?" I cannot express how highly I am pleased to find, that our names are not so much the proper appellatives of men, as a kind of distinction for learning herself; and that eloquence renders us known to those, who would be ignorant of us by any other means. An accident of the same nature happened to me a few days ago. Fabius Rufinus, a person of distinguished merit, was placed next to me at table, and below him a countryman of his, who was just then come to Rome for the first time. Rufinus desired his friend to take notice of me, and entered into a conversation concerning the object of my studies: to whom the other immediately replied, "That it must undoubtedly then be Pliny." To own the truth, I look upon these instances as a very considerable recompence of my labours. Had Demosthenes

reason to be pleased with the old woman of Athens exclaiming—"This is Demosthenes!"* and may I not be allowed to congratulate myself upon the extensive reputation my name has acquired? Yes my friend, I will rejoice in it, and without scruple confess that I do. As I only mention the judgment of others, not my own, I am not afraid of incurring the censure of vanity; † especially from

* The story, as related by Tully, is this: Demosthenes met an old woman carrying a pail of water, upon which she whispers to her companion, "This is Demosthenes!" I must not, however, conceal from the reader, that Tully condemns the Grecian orator for being pleased upon this occasion and accounts for it in the true spirit of genuine philosophy "*apud alios loqui videlicet didicerat, non multum ipse se cum.*"—Tusc. l. 5. He had learnt the art of talking to others, but was unacquainted, it seems, with the most instructive of all arts, the art of *self-converse*. A little of this home-philosophy would have taught him, in the judgment of Tully, to rate *vulgar* admiration at a lower value.

† Those who have formed their notions of *modesty* according to the false refinements in manners which latter time have introduced, will take offence, probably, at the advantageous terms in which Pliny here, and in some other passages of these letters, speaks of himself. But it will not be just to estimate our author's character by maxims which have been received in the world long since he left it. It is most certain, that modesty, according to the idea the ancients had of it, did not (neither in the truth of things does it) forbid a man to speak well of himself, where he has merited it.

you, who, as you envy no man's reputation, so you are particularly zealous for mine. Farewell.

rit to support the character he claims. True modesty consisted only (as indeed it ought only to consist) in being *ashamed* to commit any thing base and unworthy ; any thing unbecoming the dignity of human nature ; any thing in defiance of that reverence we owe to ourselves, and to that rank we hold in the order of rational beings : she was, in short, the *custos virtutum omnium*, as Tully emphatically calls her, the guardian and protectress of the whole train of human virtues. Pliny, who often recommends *modesty* as one of the most shining virtues in others, could never have spoken thus favourably of his own merit, if it had been contrary to the received notions of that most amiable quality. And that it was not, is extremely evident from the whole tenor of antiquity in the article of self-commendation. Homer's Ulysses, (to borrow the observation of a very polite and judicious critic,) " calls himself the *wisest* of the Grecians, as his Achilles does not scruple to represent himself " the *best and most valiant* of them ; and that, too, in a " council of all the princes : Virgil has given us his approbation of both the one and the other, in making Æneas " talk frequently of his own piety and valour. Socrates, in " Plato, is always brought in to his advantage ; he himself " quotes the oracle, which pronounced him to be the *wisest of men*. Xenophon represents Cyrus, upon his death-bed, " as taking notice of the greatest beauty of his own character, his humanity, in a piece which every one knows was " designed for the character of a perfect prince. Cæsar, " and the great Jewish writer of his own life, frequently " commend themselves ; the greatest critic, as well as the

LETTER XXIV.

TO SABINIANUS.

I GREATLY approve of your having, in compliance with my letter, † received again into your family and favour, a discarded freedman, whom you once admitted into a share of your affection. This placability will afford you, I doubt not, great satisfaction: it certainly, at least, has me, both as a proof that you are capable of being governed in your passion, and as an instance of your paying so much regard to me, as to yield either to my authority, or to my request. You will accept, therefore, at once, both of my applause and my thanks. At the same time, I must advise you to be disposed for the future to pardon the faults of your people,

“greatest orator among the Romans, who so often reckons
“modesty among the things which are most necessary to-
“ward rendering a man great in his profession; how open
“and frequent is he in praising himself, and setting his own
“merit in a true light? But what puts this beyond dispute,
“ (and shows, at the same time, that a just commendation
“of one’s self may be very consistent with the greatest mo-
“desty,) is to be found in the sacred writings, in which
“Moses says of himself, that he was the *meekest man upon*
“*earth*.”—Essay on Pope’s *Odys.* pt. 1. 52.

† See Let. 21. of this Book.

though there should be none to intercede in their behalf. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO MAMILIANUS.

THOUGH you complain of the crowd of military occupations which press upon you, yet, as if you were enjoying the most uninterrupted leisure, you read and admire, it seems, my poetical trifles; and not a little encourage me to persevere in amusing compositions of that kind. I begin, indeed, to pursue this sort of study, not only with a view to my diversion, but my reputation, since they have approved themselves to the judgment of a man of your dignity and learning, and, what is more, of your sincerity. At present I have some business in the courts of law, which takes up a little of my time; but as soon as I shall have dispatched it, I will again trust my muse to your candid bosom. You will suffer my little doves and sparrows to take wing among your eagles,* if you should have the same good opinion of them as they have of themselves; if not, you will kindly confine them to their cage and their nests. Farewell.

* Alluding to the Roman standard, which was an eagle fixed upon the top of a spear.

LETTER XXVI.

TO LUPERCUS.

I SAID once (and I think not improperly) of a certain orator of the present age, whose compositions are extremely regular and correct, but by no means animated and sublime, "His only fault" is, that he has none." Whereas he, who is possessed of the true spirit of oratory, should be bold and daring; should sometimes rise above the precise limits of common rules; and frequently soar even to dangerous heights; for danger is generally near whatever is towering and exalted. The plain, 'tis true, affords a safer, but for that reason a more humble and inglorious path: they, who run, are more likely to stumble than they who creep; but the latter gain no honour by not slipping, while the former even fall with glory. It is with eloquence as with some other arts; she is never more pleasing than when she risks most. Have you not observed what acclamations our rope-dancers excite, at the instant of imminent danger? Whatever is most surprisingly hazardous, or, as the Greeks better express it, whatever is most *perilous*, most excites our admiration. The pilot's skill is by no means equally proved in a calm, as in a storm: in the former case, he tamely enters the port, unno-

ticed and unapplauded; but when the cordage cracks, the mast bends, and the rudder groans, then it is that he shines in all his glory, and is hailed as little inferior to a sea-god. The reason of making these observations is, because, if I mistake not, you have marked some passages in my writings for being tumid, exuberant, and overwrought, which, in my estimation, are but adequate to the idea, or boldly sublime. It is material, therefore, to consider, whether your criticism turns upon such points as are real faults, or only striking and remarkable expressions. Whatever is elevated is sure to be observed; but it requires a very nice judgment to distinguish the bounds between true and false grandeur; between a just and enormous height. To give an instance out of Homer, both of the grand and elevated style, in the following lines, which can scarcely, I imagine, have escaped any reader's observation :

Heaven in loud thunder bids the trumpet sound ;
And wide beneath them groans the rending ground. *

Again,

Reclined on clouds his steed and armour lay. †

* Iliad. xxi. 387, Pope's Trans.

† Iliad. v. 356, speaking of Mars.

So in this whole passage :

As torrents roll, increased by numerous rills,
With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
Rush to the vales, and, poured along the plain,
Roar through a thousand channels to the main.*

It requires, I say, a very delicate hand to poise these metaphors, and determine whether they are too figurative and pompous, or truly majestic and sublime. Not that I think any thing which I have written, or can write, admits of comparison with these. I am not extravagant enough to entertain

* Iliad. 4. v. 452. Pope's Transl. It is with great judgment Pliny distinguishes between *grandeur* and *elevation*, which, though they are sometimes confounded, are most certainly distinct. *Grandeur* seems to consist entirely in the sentiment, and is the first of the five species of sublimity which Longinus has enumerated. (sect. 8.) The passage that admired critic quotes from the account which Moses gives of the creation, is of this kind : *God said, let there be light, and there was light.* Here is nothing in the expression ornamented or elevated ; the language is plain and simple, yet conveys to the mind the noblest idea of Omnipotence, that the utmost efforts of the strongest imagination can conceive. But when a sublime thought is clothed (if I may so say) in all the graceful propriety of just figure, it then becomes elevated. The illustrations, which our author produces from Homer, are of this sort, where greatness of sentiment is heightened by beauty of imagery.

so proud an opinion : what I would be understood to contend for is, that we should throw up the reins to eloquence, nor curb the spirited exertions of genius by too much restraint. But it will be said, perhaps, there is a wide difference between orators and poets. As if Tully were not as bold in his figures as any of the poets ! Not to mention particular instances from him, in an article concerning which, I imagine, there can be no dispute ; does Demosthenes † himself, that model and standard of true oratory, does Demosthenes check and repress the fire of his indignation, in that well known passage which begins thus : “ Ye infamous flatterers, ye evil genii,” &c. ? —And again, “ It is neither with stones nor bricks that I have fortified this city,” &c.—And afterwards ; “ I have

† The design of Pliny, in this letter, is to justify the figurative expressions he had employed, probably in some oration, by instances of the same warmth of colouring, from those great masters of eloquence, Demosthenes and his rival Æschines. But the force of the passages which he produces from these orators, must necessarily be greatly weakened to a mere modern reader, some of them being only hinted at, as generally well known ; and the metaphors, in several of the others, have either lost much of their original spirit and boldness, by being introduced and received in common language, or cannot, perhaps, be preserved in an English translation.

"*thrown* up these *out-works* before Attica, and
"pointed out to you all the resources which hu-
"man prudence can suggest," &c.—And in ano-
ther place; "O, my countrymen, I swear by the
"immortal gods, that he is *intoxicated* with the
"spirit of his own magnanimous actions," &c.—
But what can be more daring and beautiful than
that long digression, which begins in this manner:
"A terrible disease, O my countrymen, has seized
"upon all Greece," &c. ?—The following passage,
likewise, though somewhat shorter, is conceived in
the same boldness of metaphor: "Then it was I
"rose up in opposition to the daring Pytho, who
"poured forth a torrent of menaces against you,"
&c.—The subsequent stricture is of the same
stamp: "When a man has strengthened himself,
"as Philip has, by rapine and wickedness, upon
"the first pretence that offers, at the first impolitic
"step, be it ever so inconsiderable, *he bristles up*
"*his mane*, and seizes all," &c.—So, in the same
style with the foregoing, is this: "*Railed off*, as it
"were, from the privileges of society, by the con-
"current and just judgments of the three tribunals
"in the city."—And in the same place: "O Aris-
"togiton! you have *betrayed* that mercy which
"used to be shown to offences of this nature, or
"rather, indeed, you have wholly *destroyed* it. In
"vain, then, would you flee for refuge to a *port*,

" which you have *shut up*, and *choked with piles*." —He had said before; " I am afraid, therefore, " you should appear, in the judgment of some, to " have *erected a public seminary* of faction: for " there is a weakness in all wickedness, which " renders it apt to betray itself!" —And a little lower: " I see none of these resources open to " him; but all is *precipice*, *gulph*, and *profound abyss*." —And again: " Nor do I imagine that " our ancestors instituted those courts of judica- " ture, that men of his character should be *planted* " there; but, on the contrary, *eradicated*, that none " may emulate their evil actions." —And after- wards: " If he is then the *artificer* of every wick- " edness, if he openly makes it his *trade and traffic*," &c. —And a thousand other passages which I might cite to the same purpose; not to mention those expressions which Æschines says, are not words, but *wonders*. You will tell me, perhaps, I have unwarily mentioned Æschines, since Demosthenes is condemned, even by him, for running into these figurative expressions. But observe, I entreat you, how far superior the former orator is to his criticizer, and superior, too, in the very passages to which he objects; for in others, the strength of his genius discovers itself; in those above quoted, the sublimity of it shines out. But does Æschines himself avoid that mode of rhetoric which he re-

proves in Demosthenes? "The orator," says he, "O ye Athenians, and the law, ought to *speak* the same language; but when the *voice* of the law declares one thing, and that of the orator another, we should give our vote to the justice of the law, not to the impudence of the orator."—And in another place: "He afterwards manifestly discovered the design he had, of concealing his fraud under cover of the decree, having expressly declared therein, that the ambassadors sent to the Oretæ gave the five talents, not to you, but to Callias. And that you may be convinced what I say is the truth, (after having *stripped* the decree of its *gallies*, its *trim*, and its arrogant ostentation,) read the clause itself."—And in another part: "Suffer him not to *break cover*, and *escape* out of the limits of the question."—A metaphor he is so fond of, that he repeats it again: "But remaining firm and confident in the assembly, *drive* him into the merits of the question, and observe well how he *doubles*."—Is his style more reserved and simple, when he says, "But you are for ever *wounding* our ears, and are more concerned in the success of your daily harangues, than for the salvation of the city."—What follows is conceived in a yet higher strain of figure: "Will you not expel this man as the common calamity of Greece? Will you not seize

“and punish this *pirate* of the state, who *sail* about in quest of favourable conjunctures,” &c.—with many other passages of the like nature.

And now I expect you will make the same attacks upon certain expressions in this letter, as you did upon those I have been endeavouring to defend. The rudder that *groans*, and the pilot compared to a *sea god*, will not, I suppose, escape your criticism: for I perceive, while I am suing for indulgence to my former style, I have fallen into the same kind of figurative diction which you condemn. But attack them if you please, provided you will immediately appoint a day when we may meet to discuss these matters in person: you will then either teach *me* to be less daring, or I shall learn *you* to be more bold. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO LATERANUS.

I HAVE had many occasions to observe the power, the dignity, the majesty, and, I will add, too, even the *divine* efficacy there is in history; but I never met with so strong an instance of it as lately. An author had recited part of an historical performance, which he had drawn up with the utmost regard to truth, reserving the remainder for another reading, when, behold! the friends of a cer-

tain person came to him, and earnestly conjured him not to recite the rest; so much were they ashamed to hear those actions repeated, which yet they did not blush to commit! The historian complied with their request, as he honourably might. Nevertheless, both the history and the action still remain, and will ever remain and be read. It will be read, too, with so much the greater curiosity, as the publication is delayed: for nothing raises the inquisitive disposition of mankind so much, as to defer its gratification. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO ROMANUS.

YOUR letters have at length reached me, and I received three at once, all most elegantly written, and in the warmest spirit of friendship; in short, such as I had reason to expect from you, especially after having wished for them so long. In one, you enjoin me the very agreeable commission of forwarding your letters to that excellent lady, the virtuous Plotina: * I have forwarded them.

* Plotina was consort to the emperor Trajan. Her virtues are celebrated by several historians; and our author draws a most amiable character of her in few words, in his noble panegyric upon that prince. (PLIN. *Paneg.* No. 83.) He represents her (and he could not give a higher idea of

In the same letter you recommend to me Popilius Artemisius, and accordingly I have performed his request. You tell me, also, your vintage has proved extremely moderate. That complaint, notwithstanding we are separated by such distant countries, is common to us both. Your second letter informs me, that you are employed in dictating and writing upon a subject, wherein you have me strongly in view. I am much obliged to you, and should be more so, if you would give me the pleasure of reading your performance. It is but just, indeed, that, as I communicate to you all my compositions, you should suffer me to partake of yours, even though they should turn upon subjects which concern others. You promise me, in the close of this letter, that as soon as you shall be informed, with certainty, in what manner I intend to dispose of myself, you will make an elopement from your family, and immediately fly to me: I am already preparing certain chains for you; which, when I

her merit) as worthy the choice of that excellent emperor; of a sanctity of manners worthy of ancient Rome; plain in her habit, modest in her equipage, and polite in her address. She greatly contributed, it is said, (*Eutrop.* L. 8. c. 6.) to the wise choice which Trajan made of a successor; and Adrian, in gratitude for her good offices to him in that election, dedicated a magnificent temple to her memory, at Nismes, in Languedoc, the remains of which are still to be seen. (MONTFAUC. *Diar.* p. 4.)

have you here, you will by no means be able to break. I learn from your third, that my oration in behalf of Clarius has been delivered to you, and that it appears more full than when you heard it pronounced. It is so, I confess; for I afterwards very considerably enlarged it. You mention having sent me another letter, which you say was written with peculiar consideration, and desire to know if I have received it: I have not, but impatiently wait its arrival. In the mean while, write to me by every opportunity, and pay me for this delay with interest, which I shall compute at the highest rate: for tell me, can you expect I should acquit you upon cheaper terms? Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO RUSTICUS.


As it is better to excel in any single art, than to arrive only at mediocrity in several; so, a moderate skill in several is to be preferred, where one cannot attain to perfection in any. Upon this maxim it is, that I have attempted compositions of various sorts, as I could not expect to carry any particular one to its highest excellency. I hope, therefore, when you read any performance of mine, you will consider it with that indulgence which is due to an author, who has not confined

himself to a single subject, but has struck out into different kinds of composition. In every other sort of workmanship, the number pleads some excuse for the deficiencies of the artist; and shall works of literature, the most difficult of all others, be tried by a severer law? But whilst I am bespeaking your candour, am I not bringing my gratitude in question? For, if you receive these last pieces with the same indulgence that you have all my former, I have more reasons to hope for your praise, than to sue for your pardon: your pardon, however, will be sufficient. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO GEMINIUS.

You have frequently in conversation, and lately in a letter, commended your friend Nonius to me, for his great liberality to certain particular persons: I shall join with you in applauding him, if his bounty is not confined to those only whom you mention. I would have *him*, who desires to show himself influenced by a spirit of true generosity, be liberal to his country, his kindred, his relations, and his friends; his friends, I mean, in distress: not like those, who chiefly bestow their presents where there is the greatest ability to make returns. I do not look upon such men as parting with any thing



of their own; on the contrary, I consider their bounties as only so many disguised baits thrown out with a design of catching the property of others. Much of the same character are those, who take from one man in order to bestow on another; and aim at a reputation for munificence by sordid means. The first and fundamental principle of genuine beneficence, is to be contented with one's own; and after that to cherish and embrace all the most indigent of every kind, in one comprehensive circle of general benevolence. If your friend observes this rule in its full extent, he is entirely to be commended; if he only partially pursues it, still he deserves (in a less degree indeed, however he deserves) praise: so uncommon is it to meet with an instance of generosity, even of the most imperfect kind! the lust of avarice has so totally seized upon mankind, that their wealth seems rather to possess them, than they to possess their wealth. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI.

TO SARDUS.

I STILL continued to enjoy your company, even after we had parted; for I entertained myself with reading your book. And I frequently perused, with particular complacency, (I honestly own it,)

those passages of which I am the subject : a subject upon which, indeed, you have been extremely copious. With what a variety of expression, and in how many different lights, have you placed the same sentiments concerning the same person? Will you suffer me to mingle my applauses with my acknowledgments? I can do neither sufficiently; and if I could, there would be somewhat, I fear, of vanity, in making that person the subject of my praise, which is, in truth, the object of my thanks. I will only add, then, that I thought your compliments to me raised the merit of your performance; as the merit of your performance heightened the pleasure of your compliments. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO TITIANUS.

WHAT are you doing? And what do you propose to do? As for myself, I pass my life in the most agreeable, that is, in the most disengaged manner imaginable. I do not find myself, therefore, in the humour to write a long letter, though I am to read one. I am too much a man of indolence for the former, and just idle enough for the latter: for none are more indolent, you know, than your fine gentlemen, or have more curiosity than those who have nothing to do. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO CANINIUS.

I HAVE met with a story, which, though it is authenticated by undoubted evidence, has all the air of fable, and would afford a very proper subject for the exercise of your truly poetical and sublime genius. It was related to me, the other day, at table, where the conversation happened to turn upon various kinds of extraordinary events. The person who gave the account was a man of unsuspected veracity:—but what has a poet to do with truth? However, you might venture to rely upon his testimony, even though you had the character of a faithful historian to support. There is in Africa a town called Hippo, situated not far from the sea-coast: it stands upon a navigable lake, from whence a river runs into the main ocean, and ebbs and flows with the sea. Persons of all ages divert themselves here with fishing, sailing, or swimming; especially boys, whom love of play and idleness bring thither. The contest among them is, who shall have the glory of swimming farthest; and he that leaves the shore and his companions at the greatest distance, gains the victory. It happened, in one of these trials of skill, that a certain boy, more bold than the rest, launched out towards

the opposite shore. He was met by a dolphin,* who sometimes swam before him, and sometimes behind him, then played round him, and at last took him upon his back, then set him down, and afterwards took him up again; and thus he carried the poor frightened boy out into the deepest part; when immediately he turns back again to the shore, and lands him among his companions. The fame of this remarkable event spread through the town, and crowds of people flocked round the boy (whom they viewed as a kind of prodigy,) to ask him questions, and hear him relate the story. The next day the shore was lined with multitudes of spectators, all attentively contemplating the ocean, and (what indeed is almost itself an ocean) the lake. In the mean while, the boys swam as usual, and, among the rest, the youth I am speaking of went into the lake, but with more caution than before. The dolphin again appeared, and came to the boy, who, together with his companions, swam away with the utmost precipitation. The dolphin, as it were, to invite and recal them, leaped and dived up and down, darting about in a

* This animal is celebrated by several of the ancients for its philanthropy; and Pliny the elder, in particular, relates this very story, among other instances, in confirmation of that notion. See *PLIN. Hist. Nat.* l. 9. c. 8.

thousand different convolutions. This he practised for several days together, till the people (accustomed from their infancy to the sea,) began to be ashamed of their timidity. They ventured, therefore, to advance nearer, playing with him, and calling him to them; while he, in return, suffered himself to be touched and stroked. Use rendered them more courageous: the boy, in particular, who first had experienced the safety, swam by the side of him, and leaping upon his back, was carried about in that manner: thus they gradually became acquainted and delighted with each other. There seemed now, indeed, to be no fear on either side, the confidence of the one, and tameness of the other, mutually increasing; the rest of the boys, in the mean while, surrounding and encouraging their companion. It is very remarkable, that this dolphin was followed by a second, which seemed only as a spectator and attendant on the former; for he did not at all submit to the same familiarities as the first, but only conducted him backwards and forwards, as the boys did their comrade. But what is farther surprising, and no less true than that which I have already related, is, this dolphin, who thus played with the boys, and carried them upon his back, would come upon the shore, dry himself in the sand, and, as soon as he grew warm, roll back into the sea. Octavius

Avitus, deputy-governor of the province, actuated by an absurd piece of superstition, poured some precious ointment * over him as he lay on the shore; the novelty and smell of which made him retire into the ocean, and it was not till after several days that he was seen again, when he appeared dull and languid; however, he recovered his strength, and continued his usual playful tricks. All the magistrates round the country flocked hither to view this sight; the entertainment of whom, upon their arrival, and during their stay, was an additional expence, which the slender finances of this little community would ill afford; besides, that the quiet and retirement of the place was utterly destroyed. It was thought proper, therefore, to remove the occasion of this concourse, by privately killing the poor dolphin. And now, with what a flow of tenderness will you describe this affecting catastrophe! † and how will your genius

* It was a religious ceremony practised by the ancients, to pour precious ointments upon the statues of their gods: Avitus, it is probable, imagined this dolphin was some sea divinity, and therefore expressed his veneration of him, by the solemnity of a sacred unction.

† The overflowing humanity of Pliny's temper breaks out upon all occasions, but he discovers it in nothing more strongly than by the impression which this little story appears to have made upon him. True benevolence, indeed,

adorn and improve the interesting story ! Though, indeed, the subject does not require any fictitious embellishments ; it will be sufficient to describe the fact in all its real circumstances. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

ASSIST me in settling my doubts. I have not, I am told, a good manner of reading verses : as my talent lies chiefly in reciting orations, I succeed so much the worse, it seems, in poetry. I design,

extends itself through the whole compass of existence, and sympathizes with the distress of every creature capable of sensation. Little minds may be apt to consider a compassion of this inferior kind, as an instance of weakness ; but it is undoubtedly the evidence of a noble nature. Homer thought it not unbecoming the character even of a hero, to melt into tears at a distress of this sort, and has given us a most amiable and affecting picture of Ulysses weeping over his faithful dog Argus, when he expires at his feet :


————— αὐτὰρ ὁ νοσφιν ἰδὼν ἀπομορξάτο δακρυ.

Πρὶα λαθὼν Εὐμαιον —————

Soft pity touched the mighty master's soul ;
 Adown his cheek the tear unbidden stole,
 Stole unperceived ; he turned his head, and dried
 The drop humane. ————— *Odys. xvii. Πορρ*

therefore, as I am engaged to recite some poems to my particular friends, to make use of my freedman for that purpose. It is an instance, I own, of my treating them with little ceremony, that I assign this business to a person who is himself not very expert in it. However, he will perform, I am sure, better than I can, provided his fears do not disconcert him; for he is as novel a reader as I am a poet. Now the question is, how it becomes me to behave while he is discharging my office; shall I sit in a fixed and indolent posture, or follow him as he pronounces, with my looks, hands, and a low tone of applause, in the manner of a certain person whom you know? But I am apprehensive I can appropriate my gestures * no better than I can

* In the original it is called *saltatio*, which means a motion of the hands, accommodated either to one's own, or another's elocution. Our language does not supply a proper word for this gesture, as indeed we have too little occasion to find the want of it; the *chironomic* art, so much studied by the ancients, being in the number of those which have been long since lost. But if the *indoctæ rusticæve manus*, (Quinctilian) the awkward and unmeaning disposition of the hands, would have spoiled the noblest speech at Rome or Athens, that Tully or Demosthenes, in all the warmth of their enlivening eloquence, ever delivered, it would not, perhaps, be time ill employed, if our modern orators would give a little more attention to the graceful management of those essential instruments of affecting elo-



read. I repeat it again, therefore, you must extricate me out of this difficulty, and tell me truly, whether you think it more excusable to read ill, than to practise or omit any of the circumstances above-mentioned. Farewell.

LETTER XXXV.

TO APPIUS.

I HAVE received your book, and return you my thanks, but am at present too much engaged to have time to read it; which, however, I impatiently wish to do. I have that high reverence for literature in general, and for your compositions in particular, that I think it a sort of profanation to approach them but with a mind entirely disengaged. I extremely approve of your care in

cution. This becoming art, so far as it was connected with masculine oratory, Pliny, most certainly, could not but be well skilled in: it is probable, therefore, what he says, in this place, alludes to this *affected manner* which certain authors of his time had fallen into, when they attended the rehearsal of their own works; and that the whole turn of this epistle is ironical. This conjecture seems supported, not only by the subject of the letter, which is scarce of importance enough to bear a serious enquiry; but also by the expression he sets out with, viz. *Explica æstum meum*, which seems to be of the ludicrous kind.

revising your works ; but remember, correctness has its limits : too much polishing rather weakens than strengthens. Besides, this excessive delicacy, while it obstructs other pursuits, not only prevents any new attempts, but does not finish even what it has begun. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO FUSCUS.

You desire to know in what manner I dispose of my time in my summer villa at Tuscum ? I rise just when I find myself in the humour, though generally with the sun ; sometimes indeed sooner, but seldom later. When I am up, I continue to keep the shutters of my chamber windows closed ; as darkness and silence wonderfully promote meditation. Thus, free and abstracted from those outward objects which dissipate attention, I am left to my own thoughts ; nor suffer my mind to wander with my eyes, but keep my eyes in subjection to my mind : by these means they are not distracted with a multiplicity of external objects, and see nothing but what the imagination represents to them. If I have any composition upon my hands, this is the time I choose to consider it, not only with respect to the general plan, but even the style and expression, which I revise and cor-

rect as if I were actually writing. In this manner, I compose more or less as the subject is more or less difficult, and I find my memory able to retain it. I then call my secretary, and, opening the shutters, dictate to him what I have composed; after which I dismiss him for a little while, and then call him in again. About ten or eleven of the clock, (for I do not observe one fixed hour,) according as the weather proves, I either walk upon my terrace, or in the covered portico; and there I continue to meditate or dictate what remains upon the subject in which I happen to be engaged. From thence I get into my chariot, where I employ myself as before, when I was walking, or in my study; and find this changing of the scene refreshes and enlivens my attention. At my return, I repose myself; then take a walk, and after that, repeat aloud some Greek or Latin oration, not so much for the sake of strengthening my voice† as my digestion; though indeed the power of the voice at the same time is improved

† By the regimen which Pliny here follows, one would imagine, if he had not told us who were his physicians, that the celebrated Celsus was in the number. That author expressly recommends reading aloud, and afterwards walking, as beneficial in disorders of the stomach; "*Si quis stomacho laborat, legere clare debet; post lectionem ambulare,*" &c. *CELSI Medic. L. 1. c. 8.*

by this practice. I then walk again, am anointed, take my exercises, and go into the bath. At supper, if I have only my wife, or a few friends with me; some author is read to us; and, after supper, we are entertained either with music, or an interlude. When that is finished, I take my walk with my family, in the number of which I am not without some persons of literature. Thus we pass our evenings in various conversation; and the day, even when it is at the longest, steals imperceptibly away. Upon some occasions, I change the order in certain of the articles above-mentioned. For instance, if I have studied longer, or walked more than usual, after my second sleep, and reading an oration or two aloud, instead of using my chariot, I get on horseback; by which means I take as much exercise, and lose less time. The visits of my friends from the neighbouring villages claim some part of the day; and sometimes, by an agreeable interruption, they come in very seasonably to relieve me, when I am fatigued. I now and then amuse myself with sporting, but always take my tablets into the field, that if I should not meet with game, I may at least bring home something.† Part of my time, too, is allotted to my tenants, though indeed not so much of it as they desire:

† See Book I. Letter 6, and the note there.

and I return from settling their rustic controversies, with a better relish to my studies and more elegant occupations. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVII.

F 1

TO PAULINUS.

As you are not of a disposition to expect from your friends, the common ceremonies of the world, when they cannot observe them without inconvenience to themselves; so I too warmly love you to be apprehensive you will take it unkind, my not waiting upon you on the first day of your entrance upon the consular office; especially as I am detained here by the necessity of letting my farms upon long leases. I am obliged to enter upon an entire new plan with my tenants; for, under the former leases, though I made them very considerable abatements, they have run greatly in arrear. For this reason, several of them have not only taken no sort of care to lessen a debt, which they found themselves incapable of wholly discharging; but even seized and consumed all the produce of the lands, in the belief that it would now be no advantage to themselves to spare it. I must, therefore, obviate this increasing evil, and endeavour to find out some remedy against it. The only one I can think of is, not to reserve my rent in money,

but in kind, and so place some of my servants to overlook the tillage, and guard the stock; as indeed there is no sort of revenue more agreeable to reason, than what arises from the bounty of the soil, the seasons, and the climate. 'Tis true, this method will require great integrity and diligent attendance in the person I appoint my bailiff, and put me to the expence of employing many hands. However, I must hazard the experiment; and, as in an inveterate distemper, try every change of regimen. You see, it is not any pleasurable indulgence that prevents my attending you on the first day of your consulship. I shall celebrate it, nevertheless, with as much festivity as if I were present, and pay my vows for you here, with sentiments of the warmest joy and congratulation. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO SATERNINUS.

YES, I sincerely applaud your friend Rufus; not because you desire me, but because I think he highly merits approbation. I have perused his very finished performance; to which, though my affection for the author added a considerable recommendation, yet it did not blind my judgment; for the malicious critic is not, I trust, the only judicious reader. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MUSTIUS.

IN compliance with the advice of the Aruspices,† I intend to rebuild and enlarge the temple of Ceres, which stands upon my estate. It is indeed a very ancient fabric, and though extremely small, yet, upon a certain stated anniversary, is much frequented. On the 13th of September, great numbers of people, from all the country round, assemble there; at which time many affairs are transacted, and many vows paid and offered; but there is no shelter for them against the inclemency of the weather. I think, therefore, I shall perform an act both of piety and munificence, if, at the same time that I build a beautiful temple, I add to it a spacious portico; the first for the service of the goddess, the other for the use of the people. I beg you to purchase for me four marble pillars, of whatever kind you shall think proper; as also a quantity of marble for laying the floor, and incrusting the walls. You must likewise either buy a statue of the goddess, or procure one to be made.

† The business of the Aruspices was to examine the beasts which were offered in sacrifice, and from thence to foretel the success of any enterprise.

for age has maimed, in some parts, the ancient one of wood which stands there at present. With respect to the portico, I do not recollect there is any thing you can send me that will be serviceable; unless you will sketch me out a plan suitable to the situation of the place. It is not practicable to build it round the temple, because it is encompassed on one side by the river, whose banks are exceedingly steep; and on the other, by the high road. Beyond this road lies a very large meadow, in which the portico may be conveniently enough placed, opposite to the temple; unless you, who know so well how to conquer by art the inconveniences of nature, can propose some better plan. Farewell.

LETTER XL.

TO FUSCUS.

You are much pleased, I find, with the account I gave you in my former letter, * of the manner in which I spend the summer season at Tuscum; and desire to know what alteration I make in my method, when I am at Laurentinum in the winter? None, except abridging myself of my sleep at noon, and employing several hours both before

* See Letter 36. of this Book, p. 206.

day-light and after sun-set in study: but if any public business requires my early attendance at Rome, (which in winter very frequently happens,) instead of having interludes or music after supper, I meditate upon what I have previously dictated, and by often revising it in my own mind, fix it the more strongly in my memory. Thus I have given you a general sketch of my mode of life, both in summer and winter; to which you may add the intermediate seasons of spring and autumn: in these, as no part of the day is lost in sleep or dissipation, as in summer, so some time is gained for business or study by the nights being shorter than in winter. Farewell.



BOOK THE TENTH.



CONTAINING

THE LETTERS

OF

PLINY TO TRAJAN,

AND OF

TRAJAN TO PLINY.



THE
L E T T E R S
OF
PLINY.

BOOK TENTH.

LETTER I.*

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE pious affection you bore, most sacred emperor, to your august father, induced you to wish it might be late ere you succeeded him. But the

* The greater part of the following letters were written by Pliny, during his administration in the province of Bithynia. They are of a style and character extremely different from those in the preceding collection; whence some critics have injudiciously inferred, that they are the production of another hand; not considering that the occasion necessarily required a different *manner*. In letters of business, as these

immortal gods thought proper to hasten the advancement of those virtues to the helm of the commonwealth, which had already so successfully shared in the steerage.† May *you*, then, and the

chiefly are, *turn* and *sentiment* would be foreign and impertinent; politeness and elegance of expression being the essentials that constitute perfection in this kind : and in that view, though they may be less entertaining, they have not less merit than the former. But besides their particular excellence as letters, they have a farther recommendation, as so many valuable pieces of history, by throwing a strong light upon the character of one of the most amiable and glorious princes in the Roman annals. Trajan appears, throughout, in the most striking attitude that a sovereign can be placed; in the exertion of power to the godlike purposes of justice and benevolence : and what one of the ancient historians has said of him is here eminently verified, that “ *he rather chose to be loved than flattered by his people.*” To have been distinguished by the favour and friendship of a monarch of so exalted a character, is an honour that reflects the brightest lustre upon our author; as to have been served and celebrated by a minister of Pliny’s genius and virtues, is the noblest monument of glory that could have been raised to Trajan.

† Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, reigned but sixteen months and a few days. Before his death, he not only adopted Trajan, and named him for his successor, but actually admitted him into a share of the government; giving him the titles of *Cæsar*, *Germanicus*, and *Imperator*. Vid. *PLIN. Paneg.*

world through your means, enjoy every prosperity worthy of your reign ; to which let me add my wishes, most excellent emperor, upon a private as well as public account, that your health and spirits may be preserved firm and unbroken.

LETTER II.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

You have occasioned me, sir, * an inexpressible pleasure, by deeming me worthy of enjoying the

* The translator has ventured to render the appellative *Dominus* by that of *Sir*, not because he is satisfied with the strict propriety of the title, but as thinking it less exceptionable than any other our language affords. That Pliny could not intend it as a title of royalty, seems evident from several passages in his panegyric, where, whenever he uses it in that sense, he constantly includes it in a notion of tyranny. (Vid. *Paneg.* XLV. No. 4. LV. No. 7. LXXXV. No. 1.) Accordingly, we find Augustus refusing the title of *Dominus*, as conveying an odious idea : “ *Ut maledictum et opprobrium semper exhorruit.*”—SÜET. in *Aug.* c. 53. Besides, the high style of royalty would ill suit with that air of freedom and equality, which so remarkably distinguishes these letters of Pliny to Trajan ; and the graceful simplicity of the Roman consul's address would be lost in the servile forms of a modern courtier. But it appears, from a passage in Seneca, that the Romans used the word *Dominus* as a general title of respect : “ *Obvios, si nomen non succurrit, Dominos appellamus.*”—SEN. *Ep.* 3. And in that lower sense Pliny, it should seem, here employs it.

privilege which the laws confer on those who have three children. For, although it was from an indulgence to the request of the very worthy Servilianus, distinguished by his affectionate attachment to your person, that you granted this favour; yet I have the satisfaction to find, by the words of your rescript, that you complied the more willingly, as his application was in my behalf. I cannot but look upon myself as in possession of my utmost wish, after having thus received, at the entrance of your auspicious government, so distinguishing a mark of your peculiar regard; at the same time, that it considerably heightens my desire of leaving a family behind me. I was not entirely without this desire, even in the late most wretched times, † as my two marriages will induce you to believe; but the gods decreed it better, by reserving every valuable privilege to the bounty of your generous dispensations. And indeed the satisfaction of being a father will be so much the greater to me *now*, that I can look forward to the enjoyment of that felicity in the full security of public freedom.

† Alluding to the execrable reign of Domitian.

LETTER III.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE experience, most excellent emperor, I have had of your unbounded generosity to me, in my own person, encourages me to hope I may be yet farther obliged to it, in that of my friends. Viconius Romanus (who was my inseparable companion and chamber-fellow at school) claims the first rank in that number; in consequence of which, I petitioned your sacred father to promote him to the dignity of the senatorial order. But the completion of my request is reserved to your goodness; for his mother had not then advanced, in the manner the law directs, the four hundred thousand sesterces,*

* In the original it is *sestertii quadringinties*, that is, about L. 320,000 sterling; a sum so immoderate, that the commentators have suspected (and with great reason) some error must have crept into the text. Buchnerus and Gronovius imagine it should be read *quaterdecies* or *quadragies*; but this seems to be still carrying it much too high. The *census senatorius*, or the estate requisite to qualify a man to be a member of the senate, was, after different regulations, settled at length by Augustus at 1,200,000 sesterces, equal to about L. 9600 of our money. It probably stood thus in Pliny's time; for as it appears by the 19th letter of the first book, that the *census equestris* was 400,000 sesterces, which is just the sum we find it at in the reign of Augustus; so it will not, perhaps, be unreasonable to infer from thence, that

which she engaged to give him, in her letter to the late emperor your father: This promise, however, by my advice, she has since performed, having conveyed to him a sufficient estate in land, with all the necessary formalities. The difficulties, therefore, being removed which deferred the gratification of our wishes, it is with full confidence I venture to assure you of the merit of my friend Romanus, heightened and adorned as it is, not only by the liberal and polite arts, but by his extraordinary tenderness to his parents. It is to that virtue he owes the present liberality of his mother, as well as his immediate succession † to his late

the *census senatorius* had not yet undergone any alteration since the time of that emperor, as they seem to have borne a certain proportion to each other. For these reasons, therefore, both the common reading, and the emendation of the above-mentioned critics, is rejected in the translation, and the conjecture of a late editor (Gesnerus) adopted, who supposes it might be *quadringtonorum millium*, 400,000 sesterces, or about L. 3200 of our money. It has been questioned, whether by this *census senatorius* we are to understand the yearly income of the estate, or only the entire value of it; but the most generally received opinion is, that it means the latter, including both real and personal.

† Meaning, perhaps, that though he was under age when his father died, yet he had so much confidence in the prudence of Romanus, that he did not appoint him, as usual, a guardian by his will, but left him to the immediate possession of his estate.

father's estate, and also his having been adopted by his father-in-law. To these personal qualifications, the wealth and rank of his family gave an increase of lustre; and I persuade myself it will be some additional recommendation, that I am a solicitor in his behalf. Let me then entreat you, sir, to enable me to congratulate Romanus on so desirable an occasion; and at the same time to indulge an earnest, and I hope laudable ambition, of having it in my power to boast, that your favourable regards are extended, not only to myself, but to my friend.

LETTER IV. [xx.] *

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHEN by your gracious indulgence, sir, I was appointed to preside at the treasury † of Saturn, I

* N. B. The following letters to the 30th are not ranged in the same order as they are placed in any of the Latin editions; the translator having taken the liberty of changing their situation, for the sake of bringing some letters together which throw a light upon each other. The figures included between this mark [] refer to the order in which they commonly stand.

† The public treasure was kept in the temple of Saturn, where the spoils of the conquered nations were deposited. Julius Cæsar seized upon this temple in the time of the civil

immediately renounced all engagements of the bar,
(as, indeed, I never blended business of that kind

war; and what an immense wealth that plunder threw into
his hands, may be judged by the elegant description which
Lucan gives of the riches it contained :

——— *tunc conditus imo*

Eruitur templis, multis intactus ab annis

Romani census populi, &c. LUCAN. iii. 155.

At length the sacred storehouse open laid,
The hoarded wealth of ages past displayed :
There might be seen the sums proud Carthage sent,
Her long impending ruin to prevent ;
There heaped the Macedonian treasures shone,
What great Flaminius and Æmilius won
From vanquished Philip, and his hapless son ;
There lay what flying Pyrrhus lost, the gold
Scorned by the patriot's ‡ honesty of old ;
Whate'er our parsimonious sires could save,
What tributary gifts rich Syria gave,
The hundred Cretan cities' ample spoil,
What Cato gathered from the Cyprian isle ;
Riches of captive kings by Pompey borne
In happier days his triumph to adorn,
From utmost India, and the rising morn ;
Wealth infinite ! ROWE.

Pliny the elder has given a particular valuation of this
treasure which Cæsar seized, both in gold, and silver plate,

‡ Fabricius.

with the functions of the state,) that no avocations might call off my attention from the duties of that post to which I was promoted. For this reason, when the province of Africa petitioned the senate, that I might be permitted to undertake their cause against Marius Priscus, I excused myself from that office; and accordingly my excuse was allowed. But when, afterwards, the consul elect proposed, that the senate should apply to us again, and endeavour to prevail with us to yield to its inclinations, and suffer our names to be thrown into the urn; * I thought it most suitable to that tranquillity and good order which so happily distinguishes your

and in coin; (*Hist. Nat.* l. 33. c. 3.) the amount of which, according to Dr Arbuthnot's computation, is, L. 1,093,979 3s. 4d. But if there is no mistake in these sums, Cæsar did not take away by far so much as he brought in; for Plutarch relates, (*In Vit. Cæsar.*) that he placed at one time in the treasury 65,000 talents; which, according to the same ingenious author's calculation, is equivalent to 12,593,750 pounds. *Arb. Tab.* 191.

* Other senators, as well as Pliny, had excused themselves, it seems, from undertaking the management of this cause; it was proposed therefore, that they should cast lots; which is the meaning of "suffering their names to be thrown into an urn;" an urn being made use of in decisions of this kind. Accordingly, the lot fell upon our author, and his great friend the famous Cornelius Tacitus. See Book II. Letter 11, where there is a full account of this trial.

times, not to oppose (especially in so reasonable an article) the will of that august assembly. And, as I am desirous that all my words and actions may receive the sanction of your exemplary virtue, I hope you will approve of my compliance.

LETTER V. [xxi.]

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You acted as became a good citizen and a worthy senator, by paying obedience to the just requisition of that august assembly: and I have full confidence you will faithfully discharge the business you have undertaken.

LETTER VI. [iv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING been attacked last year by a severe and dangerous illness, I employed a physician,* whose care and diligence, sir, I cannot sufficiently reward, but by your gracious assistance. I entreat

* The physicians among the ancients were distinguished according to the particular branch of practice to which they confined themselves. The physician here mentioned, Pliny calls *Iatraliptes*, that is, one who applied external unctions.

you, therefore, to make him a denizen † of Rome; for, as he is the freedman of a foreigner, he is, consequently, himself also a foreigner. His name is Harpocras: his patroness (who has been dead a considerable time) was Thermuthis, the daughter of Theon. I farther entreat you to bestow the full privileges of a Roman citizen upon Helia and Antonia Harmeris, the freedwomen of Antonia Maximilla, a lady of great merit. It is at her desire ‡ I make this request.

LETTER VII. [xxii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RETURN you thanks, sir, for your ready compliance with my desire, in granting the complete privileges of a Roman to the freedwomen of a

† There was a difference between the *Jus Civitatis* and the *Jus Quiritium*; the former not extending to the same privileges as the latter, which comprehended whatever advantages a free native of Rome was entitled to: just in the same manner as with us there is a distinction between denization and naturalization.

‡ Pliny mentions his request to be at the particular desire of Maximilla, because nothing of this kind could legally be granted to a freedman without the consent of his patron; a name which was given to the master of a slave whom he had emancipated.

lady to whom I am allied; and also for making Harpocras, my physician, a denizen of Rome. But when, agreeably to your directions, I gave in an account of his age and estate, I was informed by those who are better skilled in these affairs than I pretend to be, that, as he is an Egyptian, I ought to have previously obtained for him the freedom of Alexandria, before he was made free of Rome. I confess, indeed, that as I was ignorant of any difference in this case between those of Egypt* and other countries, I contented myself with only acquainting you, that he had manumized by a foreign lady, long since deceased. However, it is an ignorance I cannot regret, since it affords me an opportunity of receiving from you a double obligation in favour of the same person. That I may legally, therefore, enjoy the benefit of your goodness, I beg you would be pleased to grant him the freedom of the city of Alexandria, as well as that of Rome. And that your gracious intentions may not meet with any farther obstacles, I have

* Upon what occasion the honour of this peculiar distinction was granted in favour of Alexandria, does not appear; possibly it might be in gratitude to a country to which the Romans were so highly obliged, being supplied with the greatest part of their corn from Egypt. This city, founded by Alexander the Great, was esteemed the most considerable in the world, next to that of Rome. It is now called *Scanderick*.

taken care, as you directed, to send an account to your freedman of his age and possessions.

LETTER VIII. [xxiii.]

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It is my resolution, in pursuance of the maxim observed by the princes my predecessors, to be extremely cautious in granting the freedom of the city of Alexandria; however, since you have obtained from me the freedom of Rome for your physician Harpocras, I cannot refuse you this other request. You must let me know to what district he belongs, that I may give you a letter to my good friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

LETTER IX. [v.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I CANNOT express, sir, the pleasure your letter gave me, by which I am informed that you have made my physician Harpocras a denizen of Alexandria; notwithstanding your resolution to follow the maxim of your predecessors in this point, by being extremely cautious in granting that privilege. Agreeably to your directions, I acquaint you, that Harpocras belongs to the district of Memphis.†

† One of the four governments of Lower Egypt.

I entreat you, then, most gracious emperor, to send me, as you promised, a letter to your good friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

As I purpose (in order to have the earliest enjoyment of your presence, so ardently wished for here) to go to meet you, I beg, sir, you would permit me to extend my journey as far as possible.

LETTER X. [vi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

IN my late indisposition, I was greatly obliged, sir, to Posthumius Marinus, my physician; and I cannot make him a suitable return, but by the assistance of your gracious indulgence. I entreat you, then, to make Chrysippus Mithridates, and his wife Stratonica, (who are related to Marinus,) denizens of Rome. I implore, likewise, the same privilege in favour of Epigonus and Mithridates, the two sons of Chrysippus; but with this restriction, * that they may remain under the dominion

* The extensive power of paternal authority was (as has been observed in the notes above,) peculiar to the Romans; but after Chrysippus was made a denizen of Rome, he was not, it should seem, consequentially entitled to that privilege over those children which were born before his denization. On the other hand, if it was expressly granted him, his children could not preserve their right of patronage over their

of their father, and yet preserve their right of patronage over their own freedmen. I farther entreat you to grant the full privileges of a Roman citizen to L. Satrius Abascantius, P. Cæsius Phosphorus, and Pancharia Soteris. This request I make with the consent of their patrons.

LETTER XI. [xxiv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AFTER your late sacred father, sir, had, in a noble speech, as well as by his own generous example, exhorted and encouraged the public to acts of munificence, I implored his permission to remove the several statues which I had of the former emperors to my corporation ; † and at the same time

own freedmen, because that right would of course devolve to their father, by means of this acquired dominion over them. The denization, therefore, of his children, is as expressly solicited as his own. But both parties becoming *Quirites*, the children by this creation, and not pleading in right of their father, would be *patres fam.* To prevent which, the clause is added, *ita ut sint in patris potestate* ; as there is another to save to them their rights of patronage over their freedmen, though they were reduced in *patriam potestatem*.

† It is highly probable, upon comparing Let. 4. B. 3. and Let. 1. B. 4. that, by the corporation here mentioned,

requested the liberty of adding his own to the number. For, as I had hitherto continued them in the respective places wherein they stood when they came into my possession by several different inheritances, they were dispersed in distant parts of my estate. He was pleased to grant my request, and at the same time to give me a very ample testimony of his approbation. I immediately, therefore, wrote to the Decurii, to desire they would allot a piece of ground, upon which I might erect a temple at my own expence; and they, as a mark of their honouring my design, offered me the choice of any site I should think proper. However, my own indisposition, in the first place, and afterward that of your father, together with the duties of that employment with which you were both pleased to entrust me, prevented me from executing my intention. But I have now, I think, a convenient opportunity of making an excursion for that purpose, as my monthly attendance † ends on the first of September, and there are several festivals in

Pliny means *Tifernum Tiberinum*, or *Citta di Castella*, as it is now called; which city had put itself under his patronage and protection.

† Pliny enjoyed the office of treasurer in conjunction with Cornutus Tertullus. It was the custom at Rome for those who had colleagues to administer the duties of their posts by monthly turns. *Buchnerus*.

the month following. My first petition therefore is, that you would permit me to adorn with your statue the temple I am going to raise; and the next, (in order to the carrying on of my design with all possible expedition,) that you would indulge me with leave of absence. It would ill become the sincerity I profess, were I to dissemble that your goodness, in complying with this desire, will at the same time be extremely serviceable to me in my own private affairs. It is absolutely necessary I should not defer any longer the letting of my lands in that province; for, besides that they amount to above four hundred thousand sesterces,* the season for dressing the vineyards is approaching, and *that* business must fall upon my new tenants. The badness of the weather likewise, for several years past, obliges me to think of making

* About L. 3200 sterling; the annual income of Pliny's estate in Tuscany. He mentions another near Comum, in the duchy of Milan, the yearly value of which does not appear. We find him likewise considering about the purchase of an estate, for which he was to give about L. 24,000 of our money; but whether he ever completed that purchase is uncertain. (See B. 3. Let. 19.) This, however, we are sure of, that his fortunes were but moderate, considering his high station and necessary expences; (See B. 2. Let. 4.) and yet, by the advantage of a judicious economy, we have seen him in the course of these letters, exercising a liberality, of which after-ages have furnished no parallel.

some abatements in my rents; which I cannot possibly settle unless I am present. I shall be indebted, then, to your indulgence, sir, both as forwarding this public act of piety, and giving me the opportunity of settling my private affairs, if you will be pleased to grant me † leave to be absent for thirty days. I cannot limit a shorter time, as the town and the estate of which I am speaking lie above an hundred and fifty miles from Rome.

LETTER XII. [xxv.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You have given me many reasons, both of a public and private nature, why you request leave of absence; but I need no other than that it is your desire: and I doubt not of your returning as soon as possible to the duty of an office, which so much requires your attendance. As I would not seem to check any instance of your affection towards me, I shall not oppose your erecting my

† The senators were not allowed to go from Rome into the provinces, without having first obtained leave of the emperor. Sicily, however, had the privilege to be excepted out of that law, as Gallia Narbonensis afterwards was, by Claudius Cæsar. *TACIT. Ann.* 12. c. 23.

statue in the place you mention; though, in general, I am extremely cautious in giving any encouragement to honours of that kind.

LETTER XIII. [viii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

As I am sensible, sir, that the highest praise my actions can receive, is to be distinguished by so excellent a prince; I beg you would be graciously pleased to add either the office of Augur or *Septemvir* ‡ (both which are now vacant,) to the dignity I already enjoy by your indulgence; that I may have the satisfaction of publicly offering up those vows for your prosperity, from the duty of my office, which I daily prefer to the gods in private, from the affection of my heart.

‡ One of the seven priests who presided over the feasts appointed in honour of Jupiter and the other gods; an office, as appears, of high dignity, since Pliny ranks it with the *Augurship*: of which, see Book IV. Let. 8. note.

LETTER XIV. [xxvi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING safely passed the promontory of Malea,* I am arrived at Ephesus † with all my train, notwithstanding I was detained for some time by contrary winds: an information, sir, in which, I trust, you will think yourself concerned. I design to pursue the remainder of my journey to the province, ‡ partly in light vessels, and partly in post-chaises: for, as the extreme heats will prevent my travelling altogether by land, so the Etesian §

* In the Peloponnesus; now called Capo Malea di-sant-Angelo. Catanæus observes, this passage was so dangerous, that the ancients had a proverb, *Cum Maleam deflexeris, domesticos obliviscere*; "The man that sails by Malea must think no more of his family."

† A city of Ionia, in Asia the Less, still remaining.

‡ Bithynia, a province in Anatolia, or Asia the Less, of which Pliny was appointed governor by Trajan, in the 6th year of his reign, A. D. 103, not as an ordinary proconsul, but as that emperor's own lieutenant, with extraordinary powers. See Dio. The following letters were written during his administration of that province.

§ A north wind in the Grecian seas, which rises yearly some time in July, and continues to the end of August; though others extend it to the middle of September. They blow only in the day time. VARENIUS's *Geog.* Vol. I. p. 513.

winds, which are now set in, will not permit me to proceed entirely by sea.

LETTER XV. [xxvii.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR information, my dear Pliny, was very acceptable to me; as it is much my concern to know in what manner you arrive at your province. I well approve of your intention to travel either by sea or land, as you shall find most convenient.

LETTER XVI. [xxviii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

As I had a very favourable voyage to Ephesus, so, in travelling post from thence, I was extremely incommoded by the heats, which occasioned a fever, and detained me some time at Pergamum.* From thence, sir, I took ship again; but being delayed by contrary winds, I did not arrive at Bithynia so soon as I hoped. † However, I have

* The famous Troy, situated in that part of Asia, which is now called Romania.

† The original adds, *id est, xv. Calend. Octobris*, which seems to have crept into the text from the marginal annotation of some glossarist; for, as Pliny mentions the time of his arrival a little lower, there is no occasion for it in this

no reason to complain of this delay, since it did not prevent me from reaching the province in time to celebrate your birth-day : a circumstance which I consider as the most auspicious that could attend me. I am at present engaged in examining the finances of the Prusenses, † their disbursements and credits ; and the farther I proceed in this affair, the more I am convinced of the necessity of my enquiry. Several considerable sums of money are owing to the city from private persons, which they neglect to pay upon various pretences ; as, on the other hand, I find the public funds are, in some instances, very unwarrantably applied. This, sir, I write to you immediately on my arrival. I entered this province on the 17th of September, § and found it in those sentiments of obedience and

place ; and it is not agreeable to his usual elegant conciseness, to repeat that circumstance twice in the same letter. Or perhaps here are two distinct letters run into one, by the carelessness of the transcribers ; the former ending with *Hæc. &c. in ipso ingressu meo scripsi* ; the latter beginning with *Quintodecimo Calend. &c.*

† Prusa, a maritime city in Bithynia, supposed by some geographers to be the same which is now called *Cheris* ; famous for producing great quantities of cherries, which take their name from thence.

§ In the 6th year of Trajan's reign, A. D. 103, and the 41st of our author's age ; he continued in this province about 18 months. Vid. *Mass. in Vit. Plin.* 129.

loyalty which you justly merit from all mankind. You will consider, sir, whether it would not be proper to send hither a surveyor; for I am inclined to think, much might be deducted from what is charged by those who have the conduct of the public works, if a faithful admeasurement were to be taken; at least I am of that opinion from what I have already seen of the accounts of this city, which I am now examining, with the assistance of Maximus.

LETTER XVII. [xxix.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I SHOULD have rejoiced to have heard that you arrived at Bithynia without inconvenience to yourself, or any of your train; and that your journey from Ephesus had been as easy, as your voyage to that place was favourable. For the rest, your letter informs me, my dear Pliny, what day you reached Bithynia. The people of that province will be convinced, I persuade myself, that I am attentive to their interest; as your conduct towards them will make it manifest, that I could have chosen no person more proper to supply my place. Your first enquiry ought, no doubt, to turn upon the state of the public finances; for it is but too evident they have been mismanaged. I have scarce surveyors

sufficient to inspect those works which I am carrying on at Rome,* and in the neighbourhood; but persons of integrity and skill in this art may be found, most certainly, in every province; so that you cannot be at a loss in that article, if you will make due enquiry.

LETTER XVIII. [vii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THOUGH I am well assured, sir, that you, who never omit any opportunity of exercising your generosity, are not unmindful of the request I lately made you; yet since you have frequently, among many other instances of your indulgence, permitted me to repeat my solicitations; I renew them now on behalf of Achiús Sura; and earnestly beseech you to honour him with the prætorship, which is become vacant. Though his ambition is extremely moderate, yet the quality of his birth,

* Among other noble works which this glorious emperor executed, the forum, or square, which went by his name, seems to have been the most magnificent. It was built with the foreign spoils he had taken in war. The covering was entirely brass, the porticos exceedingly beautiful, and the pillars of more than ordinary height and dimensions. In the centre of this forum was erected the famous pillar which has been already described. See Book VIII. Let. 4. note.

the inflexible integrity he has preserved in a very narrow fortune, and, more than all, the felicity of your times, which encourages conscious virtue to claim your favour, induce him to hope he may experience it in the present instance.

LETTER XIX. [ix.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I CONGRATULATE both you and the public, most excellent emperor, upon the great and glorious victory you have obtained; so agreeable to the heroism of ancient Rome. May the immortal gods give the same happy success to all your designs, that, under the administration of so many princely virtues, the splendour of the empire may shine out, not only in all its former, but with additional lustre.*

* It is probable the victory here alluded to was that famous one which Trajan gained over the Dacians; some account of which has been given in the notes above. It is certain, at least, Pliny lived to see his wish accomplished; this emperor having carried the Roman splendour to its highest pitch, and extended the dominions of the empire farther than any of his predecessors: after his death it began to decline.

LETTER XX. [x.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

My lieutenant, Servilius Pudens, came to Nicomedia, † sir, on the 24th of November; and by his arrival freed me, at last, from the anxiety of a very tedious expectation.

LETTER XXI. [xi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Your generosity to me, sir, was the occasion of my being connected with Roslanus Geminus, by the strongest ties; for he was my quæstor ‡ when I was consul. His behaviour to me, during the continuance of our offices, was highly respectful; and he has treated me ever since with so peculiar a regard, that, besides the many obligations I owe him upon a public account, I am indebted to him for the strongest pledges of private friendship. I entreat you, then, to comply with my request for the advancement of a worthy man, whom (if my recommendation has any weight,) you will even distinguish by your particular favour; and what-

† Now called Comedia, the capital city of Bithynia.

‡ See Vol. I. Book IV. Letter 15. note.

ever trust you shall repose in him, he will endeavour to prove himself deserving of a still higher. But I forbear to enter into a more particular detail of his merit; being persuaded, that his integrity, his probity, and his vigilance, are well known to you, not only from those high posts which he has exercised in Rome within your immediate inspection, but from his behaviour when he served under you in the army. One thing, however, my affection for him inclines me to think I have not yet sufficiently performed; and therefore, sir, I repeat my entreaties, that you will give me the pleasure, as early as possible, of rejoicing in the advancement of my quæstor; or, in other words, of receiving an addition to my own honours in the person of my friend.

LETTER XXII. [xii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I KNOW not, sir, in what words sufficiently to express the joy I received, when I heard you had, in compliance with the request of my mother-in-law * and myself, granted Cœlius Clemens the proconsulship of this province † after the expiration

* Pompeia Celerina.

† Bithynia.

of his consular office; as it is a proof that your beneficence towards me graciously extends itself through my whole family. As I dare not pretend to make an equal return to those obligations I so justly owe you, I can only have recourse to vows; and ardently implore the gods, that I may not be found unworthy of those favours, which you are repeatedly conferring upon me.

LETTER XXIII. [xiii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RECEIVED, sir, a dispatch from your freedman Lycormas, desiring me, if any embassy from Bosphorus * should come hither in the way to Rome, that I would detain it till his arrival. None has yet arrived, at least in the city, † where I now am. But a courier passing through this place from the king of Sarmatia, ‡ I embrace the opportunity which

* Bosphorus Cimerius, now called Vospero, in Krim Tartary.

† Nicea, (as appears by the 15th Letter of this Book,) a city in Bithynia, now called Ismich.

‡ Sarmatia was divided into European, Asiatic, and German Sarmatia. It is not exactly known what bounds the ancients gave to this extensive region; however, in general, it comprehended the northern parts of Russia, Muscovy, Lesser Tartary, and the greatest part of the kingdom of Poland, &c.

accidentally offers itself, of sending with him the messenger which Lycormas dispatched hither, that you might be informed at once, by his letter and the king's, of certain circumstances, which it may be expedient, perhaps, that they should come to your knowledge at the same time.

LETTER XXIV. [xiv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I AM informed, by a letter from the king of Sarmatia, that some affairs have happened, of which it is requisite you should be immediately acquainted. In order, therefore, to expedite the dispatches which his courier was charged with to you, I granted him a warrant to make use of the public post.*

* The first invention of public couriers is ascribed to Cyrus, who, in order to receive the earliest intelligence from the governors of the several provinces, erected post-houses throughout the kingdom of Persia, at equal distances, which supplied men and horses to forward the public dispatches. (*Cyrop.* l. 8. p. 496. edit. Hutchinson.) Augustus was the first who introduced this most useful institution among the Romans, by employing post-chaises, disposed at convenient distances, for the purpose of political intelligence. (*Suet. in Vit. Aug.* c. 49.) The magistrates of every city were obliged to furnish horses for these messengers, upon producing a *diploma*, or a kind of warrant, either from

LETTER XXV. [xv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE ambassador from the king of Sarmatia having remained two days, by his own choice, at Nicea, where he found me, I did not think it reasonable, sir, to detain him any longer; not only because it was still uncertain when your freedman Lycormas would arrive, but as some indispensable affairs require my presence in a different part of the province. Of this circumstance I thought it necessary that you should be informed, because I lately acquainted you in a letter, that Lycormas had desired, if an embassy should come this way from Bosphorus, that I would detain it till his arrival. But I did not see there was any pretence of retarding him any longer; especially as the

the emperor himself, or from those who had that authority under him. (PLUTARCH. *in Vit. Galbæ.*) Sometimes, though upon very extraordinary occasions, persons who travelled upon their private affairs, were allowed to avail themselves of these post-chaises. (See Letter 121. of this Book.) It is surprising they were not sooner used for the purposes of commerce and private communication. Louis XI. first established them in France, in the year 1474; but it was not till the 12th of Car. II. that the post-office was settled in England by act of parliament. (RAPIN, Vol. II. 662. fol. ed.)

dispatches from Lycormas, which (as I have already mentioned) I was not willing to detain, would probably reach you some days sooner than this ambassador.

LETTER XXVI. [xvi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RECEIVED a letter, sir, from Apuleius, an officer in the troops stationed at Nicomedia, informing me that one Callidromus, being arrested by Maximus and Dionysius, (two bakers, to whom he had hired himself,) fled for refuge to your statue ; * that being brought before a magistrate, he declared he was formerly slave to Laberius Maximus ; but being taken prisoner by Susagus,† in Mœsia,‡ he was

* Particular temples, altars, and statues, were allowed among the Romans as places of sanctuary to slaves, debtors, and malefactors. This custom was introduced by Romulus, who borrowed it probably from the Greeks ; but during the free state of Rome, few of these asylums were permitted. This custom prevailed most under the emperors, till it grew so scandalous, that the Emperor Pius found it necessary to restrain those privileged places by an edict. See *Lipsii Excurs. ad Taciti Ann. 3. c. 36.*

† General under Decebalus.

‡ A province in Dacia, comprehending the southern parts of Servia, and part of Bulgaria.

sent as a present from Decebalus to Pacorus, king of Parthia, in whose service he continued several years, from whence he made his escape, and came to Nicomedia. When he was examined before me, he confirmed this account; for which reason, I thought it necessary to send him to you.* I should have sent him sooner, but I deferred his journey, in order to make an enquiry concerning a gem which he said was taken from him, upon which was engraven the figure of Pacorus in his royal habit: I was desirous (if it could have been found) of transmitting this curiosity to you, with a small ingot of Parthian gold, which he says he brought from thence out of the mines; I have fixed my seal to it, the impression of which is a chariot drawn by four horses.

LETTER XXVII. [xvii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

YOUR freedman and procurator, Maximus, † behaved, sir, during all the time we were together,

* The second expedition of Trajan against Decebalus was undertaken the same year that Pliny went governor into this province: the reason, therefore, why Pliny sent this Callidromus to the emperor, seems to be, that some use might possibly be made of him in favour of that design.

† Receiver of the finances.

with great probity, attention, and diligence; as one strongly attached to your interest, and strictly observant of discipline. This testimony I very willingly give him; and I give it with all the fidelity I owe to you.

LETTER XXVIII. [xviii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AFTER having experienced, sir, in Gabius Bassus, who commands on the frontiers of Pontica,* the greatest integrity, honour, and diligence, as well as the most particular respect to myself, I cannot refuse him my best wishes and suffrage; and I give them to him with all that fidelity which is due to you. I have found him abundantly qualified, by having served in the army under you; and it is owing to the advantages of your discipline, that he has learned to merit the honour of your approbation. The military and the people here, who have had abundant experience of his justice and humanity, rival each other in that glorious testimony they give of his conduct, both public and private; and I certify this with all the sincerity you have a right to expect from me.

* Krim Tartary.

LETTER XXIX. [xix.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Nymphidius Lupus, * sir, served with me in the army. He commanded a body of the auxiliary forces at the same time that I was military tribune; and it was from that connection my affection for him began. A long acquaintance hath since mutually endeared and strengthened our friendship. For this reason I did violence to his repose, and insisted upon his attending me into Bithynia, as my assessor in council. He most readily granted me this proof of his amity; and, without any regard to the plea of age, or of retirement, he shared, and continues to share, with me, the fatigue of public business. I consider his relations, therefore, as my own; in which number, Nymphidius Lupus, his son, claims my particular notice. He is a youth of great merit and indefatigable application; and, in every view of his character, well worthy of so excellent a father. The early proof

* The text calls him *Primipilarem*, that is, one who had been *Primipilus*, an officer in the army, whose post was both highly honourable and profitable; among other parts of his office, he had the care of the Eagle, or chief standard of the legion.

he gave of his merit, when he commanded a regiment of foot, is a proof that he is equal to any honour you shall think proper to confer upon him; and it gained him the strongest testimony of approbation from those most illustrious personages, Julius Ferox, and Fuscus Salinator. I will add, sir, that I shall rejoice in any increase of dignity which he shall receive, as an occasion of particular satisfaction to myself.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I REQUEST your determination, sir, in a point wherein I am greatly doubtful: it is, whether I should place the public slaves* as centinels round the prisons of the several cities in this province, (as has been hitherto the practice,) or employ a party of soldiers for that purpose? On the one hand, I am afraid the public slaves will not attend this duty with the fidelity they ought; and on the other, that it will engage too large a body of the soldiery: in the mean while, I have joined a few of the latter with the former. I am apprehensive, however, there may be some danger, that this method will occasion a general neglect of duty, as

* Slaves, who were purchased by the public.

it will afford them a mutual pretence of throwing the blame upon each other.

LETTER XXXI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THERE is no occasion, my dear Pliny, to draw off any soldiers,† in order to guard the prisons. Let us rather persevere in the ancient custom observed in this province, of employing the public slaves for that purpose: the fidelity with which they shall execute their duty will depend much upon your care and strict discipline. It is greatly to be feared, as you observe, if the soldiers should be mixed with the public slaves, they will mutually trust to each other, and by that means grow so much the more negligent. But my principal objection is, that as few soldiers as possible should be withdrawn from their standard.

† In the original it is *Commilitones*, "my fellow soldiers;" an appellation which those emperors, who desired to be well with the army, affected to use. Suetonius informs us, that Augustus would never employ that expression, as thinking it a condescension unbecoming his dignity; and neither suitable to the tranquillity of the times, nor to military discipline.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

GABIUS BASSUS, who commands upon the frontiers of Pontica, in a manner suitable to the respect and duty which he owes you, has been with me, sir, for several days. As far as I could observe, he is a person of great merit, and worthy of your favour. I acquainted him with your order, that he should be contented with ten beneficiary soldiers, † two horse-guards, and one captain, out of the troops which you were pleased to assign to my command. He assured me those would not be sufficient, and that he would write to you accordingly; for which reason, I thought it proper not immediately to recall his supernumeraries.

† The most probable conjecture (for it is a point of a good deal of obscurity) concerning the *Beneficarii*, seems to be, that they were a certain number of soldiers exempted from the usual duty of their office, in order to be employed as a sort of body-guards to the general. These were probably foot, as the *Equites*, here mentioned, were perhaps of the same nature, only that they served on horseback. *Equites singularis Caesaris, Augusti*, &c. are frequently met with upon ancient inscriptions, and are generally supposed to mean the body-guards of the emperor.

LETTER XXXIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I HAVE received, from Gabius Bassus, the letter you mention, acquainting me, that the number of soldiers I had ordered him was not sufficient; and for your information I have directed my answer to be hereunto annexed. It is very material to distinguish between what the exigency of affairs requires, and what an ambitious desire of power may think necessary. As for ourselves, the interest of the public must be our only guide: accordingly, it is incumbent upon us to take all possible care, that the soldiers shall not be absent from their standard.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Prusenses, sir, having an ancient bath which lies in a ruinous state, desire your leave to repair it; but, upon examination, I am of opinion it ought to be rebuilt. I think, therefore, you may indulge them in this request, as there will be a sufficient fund for that purpose, partly from those debts which are due from private persons * to the

* See Letter 28. of this Book.

public, which I am now levying; and partly from the money they raise among themselves towards furnishing the bath with oil, which they are willing to apply to the carrying on of this building; a work which the dignity of the city, and the splendour of your times, seem to render necessary.

LETTER XXXV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IF the erecting of a public bath will not be too great a charge upon the Prusenses, we may comply with their request; provided, however, that no new tax be levied for this purpose, nor any of those taken off which are appropriated to necessary services.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I AM assured, sir, by your freedman and receiver-general Maximus, that it is necessary he should have an additional party of soldiers assigned to him, besides the *beneficarii*, † which by your orders I appointed to the very worthy Gemellinus. Those,

† See Letter 32. of this Book, in note.

therefore, which I found in his service, I thought proper he should retain, especially as he was going into Paphlagonia, ‡ in order to procure corn. For his better protection, likewise, and because it was his request, I added two of the cavalry. But I beg you would inform me, in your next dispatches, what method you would have me observe for the future in points of this nature.

LETTER XXXVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

As my freedman Maximus was going upon an extraordinary commission to procure corn, I approve of your having supplied him with a file of soldiers. But when he shall return to the duties of his former post, I think two from you, and as many from his coadjutor, my receiver-general Verbius Gemellinus, will be sufficient.

‡ A province in the Lesser Asia, bounded by the Black Sea, and the rivers Delass and Casilirmar.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE very excellent young man Sempronius Caecilianus having discovered two slaves* among the recruits, has sent them to me. But I deferred passing sentence till I had consulted you, the restorer and supporter of military discipline, concerning the punishment proper to be inflicted upon them. My principal doubt is, that although they have taken the military oath, they are not

* The Roman policy excluded slaves from entering into military service, and it was death if they did so. However, upon cases of great necessity, this maxim was dispensed with; but then they were first made free before they were received into the army, excepting only (as Servius, in his notes upon Virgil, observes,) after the fatal battle of Cannæ; when the public distress was so great, that the Romans recruited their army with their slaves, though they had not time to give them their freedom. One reason, perhaps, of this policy might be, that they did not think it safe to arm so considerable a body of men, whose numbers, in the times when the Roman luxury was highest, we may have some idea of, by the instance which Pliny the naturalist mentions of Claudius Isodorus, who, at his death, was possessed of no less than 4116 slaves, notwithstanding he had lost great numbers in the civil wars. *PLIN. Hist. Nat. xxxiii. 10. MEURSIUS de Luxu Rom.*

yet entered into any particular legion. I request you, therefore, sir, to inform me, what course I should pursue in this affair, especially as it concerns example.

LETTER XXXIX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

SEMPRONIUS CÆLIANUS has acted agreeably to my orders, in sending such persons to be tried before you, as appear to deserve capital punishment. It is material, however, in the case in question, to enquire, whether these slaves enlisted themselves voluntarily, or were chosen by the officers, or were presented as substitutes for others. If they were chosen, the officer is guilty; if they are proxies, the blame rests with those who deputed them; but if, conscious of the legal incapacities of their station, they presented themselves voluntarily, the punishment must fall upon their own heads. That they are not yet entered into any legion, makes no great difference in their case; for they ought to have given a true account of themselves immediately, upon their being approved as fit for the service.

LETTER XL.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

As I have your permission, sir, to address myself to you in all my doubts, you will not deem it below the dignity of your exalted station, to descend to those humbler affairs, which concern my administration of this province. I find there are, in several cities, particularly those of Nicomedia and Nicea, certain persons who take upon themselves to act as public slaves, † and receive an annual stipend accordingly, notwithstanding they have been condemned either to the mines, the public games, ‡ or other punishments of the like nature. Having received information of this abuse, I have been long debating with myself, how I should act. On the one hand, to send them back to their respective punishments, (many of them being now grown old, and behaving, as I am assured, with sobriety and modesty,) would, I thought, be proceeding against them too severely; on the other, to retain convicted criminals in

† See note, Letter 30. of this Book.

‡ A punishment among the Romans, usually inflicted upon slaves, by which they were to engage with wild beasts, or perform the part of gladiators, in the public shows.

the public service, seemed not altogether decent. I considered, at the same time, to support these people in idleness, would be an useless expence to the public; and to leave them to starve, would be dangerous. I was obliged, therefore, to suspend the determination of this matter, till I could consult with you. You will be desirous, perhaps, to be informed, how it happened, that these persons escaped the punishments to which they were condemned. This enquiry I have also made, but cannot return you any satisfactory answer. The decrees against them were indeed produced; but no record appears of their having ever been reversed. It was asserted, however, that these people were pardoned upon their petition to the proconsuls, or their lieutenants; which seems likely to be the truth, as it is improbable that any person would have dared to set them at liberty without authority.

LETTER XLI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You will remember you were sent into Bithynia for the particular purpose of correcting those many abuses which appeared necessary to be reformed. Now, none stands more in need of reformation, than that criminals, who have been sentenced to punish-

ment, should not only be set at liberty, (as your letter informs me,) without any apparent authority, but even appointed to employments, which ought alone to be exercised by persons whose characters are irreproachable. Those, therefore, among them, who have been convicted within these ten years, and whose sentence has not been reversed by proper authority, must be sent back to their respective punishments; but where more than ten years have elapsed since their conviction, and they are grown old and infirm, let them be disposed of in such employments, as are but few degrees removed from the punishments to which they were sentenced; that is, either to attend upon the public baths, cleanse the common sewers, or repair the streets and highways; those being the offices to which such persons are usually sentenced.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHILE I was making a progress in a different part of the province, a most destructive fire broke out at Nicomedia; which not only consumed several private houses, but also two public buildings; the town-house and the temple of Isis, though they stood on contrary sides of the street. The occasion of its spreading thus wide, was partly owing to the

violence of the wind, and partly to the indolence of the people, who, it appears, stood fixed and idle spectators of this terrible calamity. The truth is, the city was not furnished with either engines,* buckets, or any single instrument proper to extinguish fires; which I have now, however, given directions to be provided. You will consider, sir, whether it may not be advisable to form a company of firemen, consisting only of one hundred and fifty members. I will take care none but those of that business shall be admitted into it; and that the privileges granted them shall not be extended to any other purpose. As this corporate

* It has been generally imagined that the ancients had not the art of raising water by engines; but this passage seems to favour the contrary opinion. The word in the original is *Sipho*, which Hesychius explains, (as one of the commentators observes,) *instrumentum ad jaculandas aquas adversus incendia*; "an instrument to throw up water against fires." But there is a passage in Seneca which seems to put this matter beyond conjecture, though none of the critics upon this place have taken notice of it: *Solemus*, says he, *duabus manibus inter se junctis aquam concipere et compressa utrimque palma in modum siphonis exprimere*, (Q. N. l. 2. 16.) where we plainly see the use of this *Sipho* was to throw up water, and consequently the Romans were acquainted with that art. The account which Pliny gives of the fountains at his Tuscan villa is likewise another proof.

body will be restricted to so small a number of members, it will be easy to keep them under proper regulation.

LETTER XLIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You are of opinion it would be proper to establish a company of firemen in Nicomedia, agreeably to what has been practised in several other cities. But it is to be remembered, that societies of this sort have greatly disturbed the peace of the province in general, and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purpose they may be instituted, they will not fail to form themselves into factious assemblies, however short their meetings may be. It will, therefore, be safer, to provide such machines as are of service in extinguishing fires, enjoining the owners of houses to assist in preventing the mischief from spreading; and if it should be necessary, to call in the aid of the populace.

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AGREEABLY to the general notice we previously gave for that purpose, we have offered, sir, our annual vows* for your prosperity, in which that of the empire is essentially involved; imploring the gods to grant, that these yearly vows may never cease to be thus, by public authority, announced and offered.

LETTER XLV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I RECEIVED the satisfaction, my dear Pliny, of being informed by your letter, that you, together with the people under your government, have both discharged and renewed your annual vows to the immortal gods, for my health and happiness.

* This was an anniversary custom observed throughout the empire, on the 30th of December.

LETTER XLVL

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE city of Nicomedia, sir, have expended three millions three hundred and twenty-nine sesterces † in building an aquæduct; which, not answering the intent, the works are entirely fallen into ruin. They made a second attempt in another place, where they expended two millions. ‡ But in this, likewise, they were disappointed; so that, after having been at an immense charge to no purpose, they must still be at a farther expence, in order to be accommodated with water. I have examined a fine spring, from whence the water may be conveyed over arches (as was attempted in their first design) in such a manner, that the higher, as well as level and low parts of the city may be supplied. There are but very few of the old arches remaining; the square stones, however, employed in the former, may be used in turning the new arches. I am of opinion part should be raised with brick, as that will be the easier and cheaper material. But that this work may not meet with the same ill success as the former, it will be necessary to send

† About L. 24,000 of our money.

‡ About L. 16,000 of our money.

hither an architect, or some person skilled in the construction of this kind of water-works. And I will venture to say, from the beauty and usefulness of the design, it will be an erection well worthy the splendour of your times.

LETTER XLVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

CARE must be taken to supply the city of Nicomedia with water; and that business, I am well persuaded, you will perform with all the diligence you ought. But it is most certainly no less incumbent upon you to examine, by whose misconduct it has happened, that such large sums have been thrown away upon this attempt; lest they apply the money to private purposes, and the aquæduct in question, like the preceding, should be begun, and afterwards left unfinished. You will let me know the result of your enquiry.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE citizens of Nicea, sir, are building a theatre, on which, though it is not yet finished, they have already expended, as I am informed, (for I have not examined the account myself,) above ten mil-

lions of sesterces; * and, what is worse, I fear to no purpose. For, either from the foundation being laid in a marshy ground, or that the stones themselves were decayed, the walls are cracked from top to bottom. It deserves your consideration, therefore, whether it would be best to carry on this work, or entirely discontinue it; or rather, perhaps, whether it would not be most prudent absolutely to destroy it; for the foundations, upon

* About L. 80,000 of our money. To those who are not acquainted with the immense riches of the ancients, it may seem incredible that a city, and not the capital one, of a conquered province, should expend so large a sum of money upon only the shell (as it appears to be) of a theatre; but Asia was esteemed the most considerable part of the world for wealth; its fertility and exportations (as Tully observes, *Orat. pro Imp. Cn. Pomp.*) exceeding that of all other countries. The ingenious Dr Arbuthnot quotes an instance from Athenæus of Asiatic riches, which a man must be a tolerable arithmetician even to count. It is the value of the treasure of Sardanapalus, with which he made a funeral pile for himself and family, when he was besieged by Arbaces, king of the Medes. "Athenæus makes the value of the treasure of this pile amount to 100,000,000 talents, which, reckoned in Babylonian talents, amounts to L. 16,953,125,000. This was only the value of the silver; there was, besides, a tenth part of that number of talents of gold, which, if gold was reckoned in a decuple proportion, will just double that sum."—ARBUTH. *Ant. Coins*, p. 203.

which this building is raised, appear to me more expensive than solid. Several private persons have promised to erect, at their own expence, some the portico, others the galleries above the pit;† but this design cannot be executed, as the principal fabric is at a stand. This city is also rebuilding, upon a more enlarged plan, the gymnasium,‡ which was burnt down before my arrival in the province. They have already been at some (and, I doubt, a fruitless) expence. The structure is not only irregular and ill-disposed, but the present architect (who, it must be owned, is a rival to the person who was first employed) asserts, that the walls, though they are twenty-two feet thick,§ are not strong enough to support the superstructure, as their interstices are not cemented with mortar, nor are these walls strengthened with a testaceous covering.

† The word *cavea*, in the original, comprehends more than what we call the *pit*, in our theatres, as it means the whole space in which the spectators sate. These theatres being open at top, the galleries here mentioned were for the convenience of retiring in bad weather.

‡ A place in which the athletic exercises were performed, and where the philosophers used also to read their lectures.

§ A Roman foot consisted of 11 inches and 7 tenths of our standard.

The inhabitants of Claudiopolis* are sinking (I cannot call it erecting) a large public bath, upon a low spot of ground, which lies at the foot of a mountain. The fund appropriated for the carrying on of this work, arises from the money which those honorary members you were pleased to add to their senate, paid (or at least are ready to pay, whenever I call upon them) for their admission. † As I am afraid, therefore, the public money in the city of Nicea, and (what is infinitely more valuable than any pecuniary consideration) your benefaction in that of Claudiopolis, should be ill applied, I must desire you to send hither an architect to inspect, not only the theatre, but the bath; in order to consider whether, after all the expence which has already been laid out, it will be better to finish them upon the present plan, or reform the one, and remove the other; for otherwise we may perhaps throw away our future cost, by endeavouring not to lose what we have already expended.

* A city in Isaaric, a province in Asia, situated at the foot of Mount Taurus, between Lyconia, Pamphilia, Cilicia, and the sea.

† The honorary senators, that is, such who were not received into the council of the city by election, but by the appointment of the emperor, paid a certain sum of money upon their admission.

LETTER XLIX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You, who are upon the spot, will best be able to consider and determine what is proper to be done concerning the theatre, which the inhabitants of Nicea are building; as for myself, it will be sufficient if you let me know your determination. With respect to the particular parts of this theatre which are to be raised at a private charge, you will see those engagements fulfilled, when the body of the building, to which they are to be annexed, shall be finished. These paltry Greeks are, I know, immoderately fond of gymnastic diversions, and therefore, perhaps, the citizens of Nicea have planned a more magnificent fabric for this purpose than is necessary; however, they must be contented with such as will be sufficient to answer the use for which it is intended.

I entirely leave it to you to advise the Claudiopolitani as you shall think proper, with relation to their bath, which they have placed, it seems, in a very improper situation. As there is no province that is not furnished with men of skill and ingenuity, you cannot possibly want architects; unless you think it the shortest way to procure them from

Rome, when it is generally from Greece that they come to us.

LETTER L.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHEN I reflect upon the splendour of your exalted station, and the magnanimity of your spirit, nothing, I am persuaded, can be more suitable to both, than to point out to you such designs as are worthy of your glorious and immortal name, as being no less useful than magnificent. Bordering upon the territories of the city of Nicomedia is a most extensive lake; upon which the commodities of the country are easily and cheaply transported to the high road; but from thence are conveyed in carriages to the sea side, at great charge and labour. To remedy this inconvenience, will require many hands; but, upon such an occasion, they cannot be wanting; for the country, and particularly the city, is exceedingly populous; and one may assuredly hope, that every person will readily engage in a work which will be of universal benefit. It only remains then to send hither, if you shall think proper, a surveyor or an architect, in order to examine whether the lake lies above the level of the sea; the engineers of this province being of opinion that the former is higher by forty

cubits.* I find there is in the neighbourhood of this place a large canal, which was formerly cut by one of the kings of this country; but as it was left unfinished, it is uncertain whether the canal was for the purpose of draining the adjacent lands, or making a communication between the lake and the river. It is equally doubtful, whether the death of this prince, or the despair of being able to accomplish the design, prevented its completion. If the latter, I am so much the more ambitious, for the honour of your illustrious character, (and I hope you will pardon me the pride,) that *you* may have the glory of executing what *kings*† could only attempt.

* A Roman cubit is equal to 1 foot 5 inches $\frac{406}{1600}$ of our measure.—ARBUTHNOT'S *Tab.*

† A commentator upon this passage thinks this a very extraordinary compliment; "As if," says he, "an emperor of Rome could not do more than a little king of Bithynia." But it is much more probable, that this critic should be mistaken in his objection, than Pliny in his compliment; and though he will have it to be a *little* king, it is more reasonable to suppose our author meant some great king of Persia. Besides, *Imperator*, among the Romans, had not of itself any such high idea, as has been affixed to it in later times. The meaning, therefore, of this wish seems to be, that though Trajan was contented to be in title no more than general, (*Imperator*,) yet, in acts of public munificence, he might be more than those who proudly styled themselves kings.

LETTER LI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THERE is something in the scheme you propose of opening a communication between the lake and the sea, which may, perhaps, tempt me to consent. But you must first carefully examine the situation of this body of water, what quantity it contains, and from whence it is supplied; lest, by giving it an opening into the sea, it should be totally drained. You may apply to Calpurnius Macer for an engineer; as I will also send you from hence some persons skilled in works of this nature.

LETTER LII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

UPON examining the public expences of the city of Byzantium,‡ which I find are extremely great, I was informed, sir, that the appointments of the ambassador, which they send yearly to you with their homage and the decree which passes in the senate upon that occasion, amount to twelve thousand sesterces.§ But knowing the generous maxims

‡ Now Constantinople.

§ About L.96 sterling.

of your government, I thought proper to send the decree without the ambassador; that at the same time they discharged their public duty to you, they might be eased in the manner of paying it. This city is likewise taxed with the sum of three thousand sesterces,* towards defraying the expence of an envoy, whom they annually send to compliment the governor of Moesia; this expence I have also directed to be spared. I beg, sir, you would deign either to confirm my judgment, or correct my error in these points, by acquainting me with your sentiments.

LETTER LIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WELL approve, my dear Pliny, of your having excused the Byzantines the expence of sending an ambassador to me. I shall esteem their duty as sufficiently paid, though I only receive the act of their senate through your hands. The governor of Moesia must likewise excuse them, if they compliment him at a less expence.

* About L. 24 of our money.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I BEG, sir, you would settle a doubt I have concerning your *diplomas*; † whether you think proper that those *diplomas*, the dates whereof are expired, shall continue in force, and how long? For I am apprehensive I may, through ignorance, either confirm such of these instruments as are illegal, or prevent the effect of those which are necessary.

LETTER LV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THOSE diplomas, the dates whereof are expired, must by no means be made use of. For which reason it is an inviolable rule with me, to send new instruments of this kind into all the provinces before they are immediately wanted.

† A diploma is properly a grant of certain privileges, either to particular places or persons. It signifies, also, grants of other kinds; and it sometimes means post-warrants, as, perhaps, it does in this place. See Letter 14. of this Book, in the notes,

LETTER LVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

UPON intimating, sir, my design to the city of Apamea † of examining into the state of their public funds and revenues; they told me they were very willing I should inspect their accounts, but that no proconsul had ever yet perused them; as they had a privilege (and that of a very ancient date) of administering the affairs of their corporation in the manner they thought proper. I required them to draw up a memorial of what they then asserted, and I transmit it to you precisely as I received it; although I am sensible it contains several things foreign to the question. I beg you would honour me with your commands, how I am to act in this matter; for, I should be extremely sorry either to exceed, or fall short of the powers of my commission.

LETTER LVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE memorial of the Apameans, annexed to your letter, saved me the necessity of considering the-

† A city in Bithynia.

reasons they suggest, why the former proconsuls forbore to inspect their accounts; since they are willing to submit them to your examination. Their compliance deserves to be encouraged; and they may be assured the enquiry you are to make, in pursuance of my orders, shall be with a full reserve to their privileges.

LETTER LVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Nicomedians, sir, before my arrival in this province, had begun to build a new forum contiguous to their former, in a corner of which stands an ancient temple, dedicated to the *mother of the gods*. * This edifice must either be repaired, or removed; chiefly because it is a much lower building than that very lofty one which is now erecting. Upon enquiry whether any particular condition had been annexed to the dedication of this temple, I was informed that their ceremonies of dedication differ from ours. You will be pleased, therefore, sir, to consider whether a temple, which has not been consecrated according to our rites, may be

* Cybele, Rhea, or Ops, as she is severally called; from whom, according to the pagan creed, the rest of the gods are supposed to have descended.

removed, † consistently with the reverence due to religion: for, if there should be no objection from that quarter, the removal in every other respect would be extremely convenient.

LETTER LIX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You may, without scruple, my dear Pliny, if the situation requires it, remove the temple of the *mother of the gods* from the place where it now stands, to any other more commodious. You need be under no difficulty concerning the act of dedication; for the ground of a foreign city ‡ is not capable of receiving that kind of consecration which is sanctified by our laws.

LETTER LX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, sir, (with those sentiments of gratulation which your virtues so justly merit,) the day of your accession to the empire, which

† Whatever was legally consecrated, was ever afterwards unapplicable to profane uses.

‡ That is, a city not admitted to enjoy the laws and privileges of Rome.

was also its preservation, imploring the gods to preserve you in health and prosperity; for upon your welfare the security and repose of the world depends. I renewed at the same time the oath of allegiance at the head of the army, which repeated it after me in the usual form, the people of the province zealously concurring in the same oath.

LETTER LXI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR letter, my dear Pliny, was extremely acceptable, as it informed me of the zeal and affection with which you, together with the army and the provincials, solemnized the day of my accession to the empire.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE debts which were owing to the public, are, by the prudence, sir, of your councils, and the care of my administration, either actually paid, or are now recovering; but I am afraid the money must lie unemployed. For as, on one side, there are few or no opportunities of purchasing land, so, on the other, one cannot meet with any person who

is willing to borrow of the public, * (especially at the interest of 12 *per cent.*) when they can raise money upon the same terms from private hands. You will therefore consider, sir, whether it may not be advisable, in order to invite responsible persons to take this money, to lower the interest; or if that scheme should not succeed, to place it in the hands of the Decurii, upon their giving sufficient security to the public. And though they should not be willing to receive it, yet as the rate of interest will be abated, the hardship will be so much the less.

LETTER LXIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I AGREE with you, my dear Pliny, that there seems to be no other method of facilitating the placing out of the public money, than by lowering the interest; the rate of which you will determine according to the number of borrowers. But

* The reason why they did not choose to borrow of the public at the same rate of interest which they paid to private persons, was (as one of the commentators observes) because, in the former instance, they were obliged to give security; whereas, in the latter, they could raise money upon their personal credit.

to compel persons to receive it, who are not so disposed, when possibly they themselves may have no opportunity of employing it, is, by no means, consistent with the justice of my government.

LETTER LXIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RETURN you my warmest acknowledgments, sir, that, among the many important occupations in which you are engaged, you have condescended to be my guide in those points wherein I have consulted you; a favour which I must now again beseech you to grant me. A certain person presented himself to me with a complaint, that his adversaries, who had been banished for three years by the illustrious Servilius Calvus, still remained in the province; they, on the contrary, affirmed, that Calvus had revoked their sentence, and produced his edict for that purpose: I thought it necessary, therefore, to refer the affair entirely to you. For, as I have your express orders not to restore any person who has been sentenced to banishment either by myself or others; so I have no directions with respect to those, who, having been banished by some of my predecessors in this government, have by them also been restored. It is necessary for me, therefore, to beg you would in-

form me, sir, how I am to act with regard to the above-mentioned persons, as also to others, who, after having been condemned to perpetual banishment, have been found in the province without permission to return; for cases of that nature have likewise fallen under my cognizance. A person was brought before me, who had been sentenced to perpetual exile by the proconsul Julius Bassus; but, as I knew that the acts of Bassus, during his administration, had been rescinded, and that the senate had granted leave to all those who had fallen under his condemnation, of appealing from his decision at any time within the space of two years; I enquired of this man, whether he had, accordingly, stated his case to the proconsul. He replied, he had not. I entreat you, therefore, to inform me, whether you would have him sent back into exile; or whether you think some more severe, and what kind of punishment should be inflicted upon him, and such others who may hereafter be found under the same circumstances. I have annexed to my letter the decree of Calvus, together with the edict, by which the persons above-mentioned were restored, as also the decree of Bassus.

LETTER LXV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WILL let you know my determination concerning those exiles which were banished for three years by the proconsul P. Servilius Calvus, and soon afterwards restored to the province by his edict, when I shall have informed myself from him of the reasons of this proceeding. With respect to that person who was sentenced to perpetual banishment by Julius Bassus, yet continued to remain in the province, without making his appeal, if he thought himself aggrieved, (though he had two years given him for that purpose,) I would have him sent in chains to my prætorian prefects; ‡ for, only to remand him back to a punishment which he has contumaciously eluded, will by no means be a sufficient chastisement.

‡ These, in the original institution, as settled by Augustus, were only commanders of his body guards; but in the latter times of the Roman empire, they were next in authority under the emperor, to whom they seem to have acted as a sort of prime ministers.

LETTER LXVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

· WHEN I cited the judges, sir, to attend me at a sessions* which I was going to hold, Flavius Archippus claimed the privilege of being excused, as exercising the profession of a philosopher. † It was alleged by some, who were present, that he ought not only to be excused from that office, but even struck out of the roll of judges, and remanded back to the punishment from which he had escaped, by breaking his chains. At the same time, a sentence of the proconsul Velius Paullus was read, by which it appeared that Archippus had been condemned to the mines for forgery. He had nothing to produce in proof of this sentence having ever been reversed. He alleged, nevertheless, in favour of his restitution, a petition which he presented to Domitian, together with a letter from that prince, and a decree of the Prusensians

* The provinces were divided into a kind of circuits, called *conventus*, whither the proconsuls used to go in order to administer justice. The judges here mentioned must not be understood to mean the same sort of judicial officers as with us; they were rather in the nature of our juries.

† By the imperial constitutions, the philosophers were exempted from all public functions. CATANÆUS.

in his honour. To these he annexed a letter which he had received from you; as also an edict, and a letter of your august father, confirming the grants which had been made to him by Domitian. For these reasons, notwithstanding crimes of so atrocious a nature were laid to his charge, I did not think proper to determine any thing concerning him, without first consulting you, as it is an affair which seems to merit your particular decision. I have transmitted to you, with this letter, the several allegations on both sides.

DOMITIAN'S LETTER TO TERENCE MAXIMUS.

"FLAVIUS ARCHIPPUS, the philosopher, has prevailed with me to give an order for 600,000 sesterces, * to be laid out in the purchase of an estate for the support of him and his family, in the neighbourhood of Prusias, † his native country. Let this be done accordingly; and place that sum to the article of my benefactions."

* About L. 4800 of our money.

† Geographers are not agreed where to place this city; Cellarius conjectures it may possibly be the same with *Prusa ad Olympum*, Prusa at the foot of Mount Olympus in Mysia, mentioned in Letter 85. of this Book.

FROM THE SAME, TO L. APPIUS MAXIMUS.

“ I RECOMMEND, my dear Maximus, to your protection, that worthy philosopher Archippus, whose moral conduct is agreeable to the principles of the philosophy he professes ; and I would have you pay great regard to whatever he shall reasonably request.”

THE EDICT OF THE EMPEROR NERVA.

“ THERE are some points, Quirites, * concerning which the happy tenor of my government is, I am persuaded, a sufficient indication of my sentiments ; and a good prince need not give express declarations in matters wherein his intentions cannot but be universally understood. Every citizen in the empire will bear me witness, that I gave up my private repose to the security of the public, and in order that I might have the pleasure of dispensing new bounties of my own, as also of confirming those which had been granted by my predecessors. But lest the memory of him † who conferred these grants, or the diffidence of those who received them, should

* A general appellation given to the Roman people.

† Domitian.

“ occasion any interruption to the public joy, I
“ thought it no less necessary than it is agreeable
“ to me to obviate these suspicions, by assuring
“ the persons concerned of my indulgence. Let
“ it not be thought that I shall rescind either the
“ public or private acts of any former prince, in
“ order to merit the credit of restoring them ; nor
“ need any who have received the gratifications of
“ imperial favour, petition me to have them con-
“ firmed. Rather let them leave me at leisure for
“ conferring new grants ; under the assurance, that
“ I am only to be solicited for those bounties which
“ have not already been obtained, and which the
“ happier fortune of the empire has put it in my
“ power to bestow.”

FROM THE SAME, TO TULLIUS JUSTUS.

“ HAVING publicly declared my resolution to
“ confirm the edicts of my predecessors, and even
“ those also which may have been prevented by
“ their deaths from being carried into effect ; the
“ directions contained in Domitian’s rescript must
“ be observed.”

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

FLAVIUS ARCHIPPUS has conjured me, by all my vows for your prosperity, and by your immortal glory, that I would transmit to you the memorial which he presented to me. I could not refuse a request pressed upon me in *such* terms; however, I acquainted the prosecutrix with this my intention, from whom I have also received a memorial on her part. I have annexed them both to this letter; that by hearing, as it were, each party, you may the better be enabled to decide.

LETTER LXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It is possible that Domitian might be ignorant of the circumstances in which Archippus was, when he wrote the letter so much to that philosopher's credit. However, it is more agreeable to my disposition to suppose that prince designed he should be restored to his former situation; especially since he so often had the honour of a statue decreed to him by those, who could not be ignorant ‡ of the

‡ In the text of all the editions it is *qui ignorabant*, but the reasoning seems to require the negative particle; though the commentators have passed over the passage without objection.

sentence pronounced against him by the proconsul Paullus. But I do not mean to intimate, my dear Pliny, that if any new charge should be brought, you should be the less disposed to hear his accusers. I have examined the memorial of his prosecutrix, Furia Prima, as also that of Archippus himself, which you sent with your letter.

LETTER LXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE apprehensions you express, sir, * that the lake will be in danger of being entirely drained, if a communication should be opened between that and the sea, by means of the river, are agreeable to that sagacity you so eminently possess; but I think I have found a method to obviate that inconvenience. A channel may be cut from the lake to the river, and a narrow slip of land left between them. By these means the water in the lake will not only be preserved and kept distinct from the river, but the same purposes will be answered as if they were united; for, it will be very easy to convey over that little intervening ridge, whatever goods shall be brought down by the canal. This is a scheme which may be pursued, if it should be found neces-

* See Letters 50. and 51. of this Book.

sary; but I hope there will be no occasion to have recourse to it. For, in the first place, the lake itself is considerably deep; and in the next, by damming up a river which runs from it on the opposite side, and turning its course as we shall find expedient, the same quantity of water may still be retained. Besides, there are several little brooks near the place where it is proposed the channel shall be cut, which, if skilfully collected, will supply the lake with water, in proportion to what it shall discharge. But if you should rather approve of the channel's being extended farther, and cut narrower, and so conveyed directly into the sea, without running into the river; the reflux of the tide will return whatever it receives from the lake. After all, if the nature of the place should not admit of any of these schemes, the course of the water may be checked by sluices. These, however, and many other particulars, will be more skilfully examined into by the engineer, whom, agreeably to your promise, I hope you will send; for indeed, sir, it is an enterprize well worthy of your attention and magnificence. In the mean while, I have written to the illustrious Calpurnius Macer, in pursuance of your orders, to send me a skilful engineer, proper for this occasion.

LETTER LXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It is evident, my dear Pliny, that neither your prudence nor your care have been wanting in this affair of the lake; since, in order to render it of more general benefit, you have provided so many expedients against the hazard of its being drained. I leave it to your own choice to pursue whichever of the schemes shall be thought most proper. Calpurnius Macer will furnish you, no doubt, with an engineer, as artists of that kind are not wanting in his province.

LETTER LXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

A VERY considerable question, sir, in which this whole province is interested, has been lately started; concerning the state and maintenance of deserted children. † I have examined the constitutions of former princes on this head, but not finding any thing in them relating either in general or particular to the Bithynians, I thought

† That is, whether they should be considered in a state of freedom, or slavery.

it necessary to apply to you for your directions; for, in a point which seems to require the special interposition of your authority, I could not content myself with following precedents. An edict of the Emperor Augustus (as pretended) was read to me concerning one Annia; as also a letter from Vespasian to the Lacedemonians, and another from Titus to the same, with one likewise from him to the Achæans. At the same time, some letters from Domitian were exhibited to me, directed to the Proconsul Avidius Nigrinus, and Armenius Brocchus, together with one from that prince to the Lacedemonians; but I have not transmitted them to you, as well because they were not correct, (and some of them, too, of suspicious authority,) as because I imagine the true copies are preserved in your archives.

LETTER LXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE question concerning such children who were exposed by their parents, and afterwards preserved by others, and educated in a state of servitude, though born free, has been frequently discussed; but I do not find in the constitutions of the princes, my predecessors, any general regulation upon this head, extending to all the provinces. There are;

indeed, some rescripts of Domitian to Avidius Nigrinus and Armenius Brocchus, which ought to be observed; but Bithynia is not comprehended in the provinces therein mentioned. I am of opinion, therefore, that the claims of those, who assert their right of freedom upon this principle, should be allowed, without compelling them to purchase their liberty by repaying the money advanced for their maintenance.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING been petitioned by certain persons to grant them the liberty (agreeably to the practice of former proconsuls) to remove the relics of their deceased relations, suggesting that either their monuments were decayed by age, or ruined by the inundations of the river, or for other reasons of the same kind; I thought proper, sir, knowing that, in cases of this nature, it is usual at Rome to apply to the college of priests, to consult you, who are the sovereign of that sacred order, how you would have me act in this manner.

LETTER LXXIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It will be a hardship upon the provincials to oblige them to address themselves to the college of priests, whenever they may have just reasons for removing the ashes of their ancestors. In this case, therefore, it will be better you should follow the example of the governors, your predecessors, and grant or deny them this liberty as you shall see reasonable.

LETTER LXXV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I HAVE enquired, sir, at Prusa, for a proper place on which to erect the bath you were pleased to permit that city to build; and I have found one to my satisfaction. It is upon the site where formerly, I am told, stood a very beautiful fabric, but which is now entirely fallen into ruins. By fixing upon that spot, we shall gain the advantage of ornamenting the city in a part which at present is exceedingly deformed, and enlarging it at the same time, without removing any of the present edifices; only rebuilding one which is fallen to decay. There are some circumstances attending

this last structure, of which it is proper I should inform you. Claudius Polyænus bequeathed it to the emperor Claudius Cæsar, with directions that a temple should be erected to that prince in the midst of a piazza; and that the remainder of the edifice should be let out in apartments. The city received the rents for a considerable time; but the piazza, together with the whole dome, partly by having been plundered, and partly by being neglected, is entirely gone to ruin, and there is now scarce any thing remaining, but the ground upon which it stood. If you should think proper, sir, either to give or sell this spot of ground to the city, as it lies so conveniently for their purpose, they will receive the favour as the highest mark of your indulgence. I intend, with your permission, to place the bath in the vacant area, and to extend a range of porticos with seats, in that part where the former edifice stood. This new erection I design to dedicate to you, by whose bounty it will rise with all the elegance and magnificence worthy of your glorious name. I have sent you a copy of the will, by which, though it is incorrect, you will see, that Polyænus left several ornamental articles for the embellishment of this house; but these also are lost with all the rest: I will, however, make the strictest enquiry after them that I am able.

LETTER LXXVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I HAVE no objection to the Prusenses making use of the area, together with the untenanted house, which you say is fallen into ruins, for the situation of their bath. But it is not sufficiently clear by your letter, whether the temple in the centre of the piazza was actually dedicated to Claudius or not; for if it were, it is still consecrated ground.*

LETTER LXXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I HAVE been pressed by some persons to take upon myself the cognizance of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right, agreeably to a rescript of Domitian's to Minucius Rufus, and to the practice of former proconsuls. But upon casting my eye on the decree of the senate concerning cases of this nature, I find it only mentions the proconsular provinces.† I have there-

* And consequently, by the Roman laws, inapplicable to any other purpose.

† The Roman provinces, in the times of the emperors, were of two sorts, and distinguished by the name of the

fore, sir, deferred interfering in this affair, till I shall receive your commands how you would have me act.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IF you will send me the decree of the senate, which occasioned your doubt, I shall be able to judge, whether it is proper you should take cognizance of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right.

Provinciae Caesaris, and the *Provinciae Senatus*. The *Provinciae Caesaris*, or imperial provinces, were such as the emperor, for reasons of policy, reserved to his own immediate administration, or of those whom he thought proper to appoint: the *Provinciae Senatus*, or proconsular provinces, were such as he left to the government of proconsuls, or prætors, chosen in the ordinary method of election. Vide Suet. in *Aug. c. 44. n. 1.* Of the former kind was Bithynia, at the time when our author presided in that province. Vide Masson. *Vit. Plin. p. 133.*

LETTER LXXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

JULIUS LARGUS, of the province of Pontica, * (a person whom I never saw, nor indeed ever heard his name till lately,) in confidence, sir, of your distinguishing judgment in my favour, has intrusted me with the execution of the last instance of his loyalty towards you. He has left me, by his will, his estate upon trust, in the first place to receive out of it, 50,000 sesterces, † for my own use, and to apply the remainder for the benefit of the cities of Heraclea and Tios, ‡ either by erecting some public edifice dedicated to your honour, or instituting Athletic games, as I shall judge proper. These games are to be celebrated every five years, and to be called *Trajan's games*. My principal reason for acquainting you with this bequest is, that I may receive your directions, which of the respective alternatives to choose.

* A province in Asia, bordering upon the Black Sea, and, by some ancient geographers, considered as one province with Bithynia.

† About L. 400 sterling.

‡ Cities of Pontus, near the Euxine or Black Sea.

LETTER LXXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

By the prudent choice Julius Largus has made of a trustee, one would imagine he had known you perfectly well. You will consider, then, which of the alternatives will most tend to perpetuate the testator's memory, under the circumstances of the respective cities; and make your option accordingly.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

You acted agreeably, sir, to your usual consummate prudence, when you ordered the illustrious Calpurnius Macer to send a legionary centurion to Byzantium: † you will consider, whether the city of Juliopolis does not also deserve the same attention; which, though it is extremely small, sustains very great burthens, and is so much the more exposed to oppressions, as it is less capable of resisting them. Whatever benefits you shall confer upon that city, will in effect be advantageous to the whole country; for it is situated at the entrance

† Constantinople.

of Bithynia, and is the town through which all who travel into this province generally pass.

LETTER LXXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE circumstances of the city of Byzantium are such, by the great confluence of strangers to it, that I thought it incumbent upon me to honour it with a legionary centurion's guard, which was always granted to them in former reigns. But, if we should distinguish the city of Juliopolis in the same manner, it will be introducing a precedent for many other towns, whose claim to that favour will rise in proportion to their want of strength. I have so much confidence, however, in your administration, as to believe you will omit no method of protecting them from injuries. If any persons shall act contrary to the discipline I have enjoined, let them be instantly corrected; or if they happen to be soldiers, and their crimes should be too enormous for immediate chastisement, I would have them sent to their officers, with an account of the particular misdemeanour you shall find they have committed: but, if the delinquents should be on their way to Rome, inform me by letter.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

By a law of Pompey's, * concerning the Bithynians, it is enacted, sir, that no person shall be a magistrate, or be chosen into the senate, under the age of thirty. By the same law it is declared, that those, who have exercised the office of magistrate, are qualified to be members of the senate. Subsequent to this law, the Emperor Augustus published an edict, by which it was ordained, that persons of the age of twenty-two should be capable of being magistrates. The question, therefore, is, whether those, who have exercised the functions of a magistrate before the age of thirty, may be legally chosen into the senate by the censors? † And if

* Pompey the Great having subdued Mithridates, and by that means greatly enlarged the Roman empire, passed several laws relating to the newly-conquered provinces, and, among others, that which is here mentioned; as Catanzus observes from Appian.

† The right of electing senators did not originally belong to the censors, who were only, as Tully somewhere calls them, *Guardians of the discipline and manners of the city*; but, in process of time, they engrossed the whole privilege of conferring that honour.

so, whether, by the same kind of construction, they may be elected senators, at the age which entitles them to be magistrates, though they should not actually have borne any office? For this custom, it seems, has hitherto been observed, and is said to be expedient; as it is rather more advantageous, that persons of noble birth should be admitted into the senate, than those of plebeian rank. The censors elect having desired my sentiments upon this point, I was of opinion, that, both by the law of Pompey, and the edict of Augustus, they who had exercised the magistracy before the age of thirty, might be chosen into the senate; and for this reason, because the edict allows the office of magistrate to be undertaken before thirty, and the law declares, that whoever has been a magistrate, should be eligible into the senate. But with respect to those who never discharged any office in the state, though they were of the age required for that purpose, I had some doubt; and therefore, sir, I apply to you for your directions. I have subjoined to this letter the heads of the law, together with the edict of Augustus.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I AGREE with you, my dear Pliny, in your construction; and am of opinion, that the law of Pompey is so far repealed by the edict of the Emperor Augustus, that those persons, who are not under twenty-two years of age, may execute the office of magistrates, and be received into the senate of their respective cities. But I think that they, who are under thirty years of age, and have not discharged the function of a magistrate, cannot, upon pretence that in point of years they were competent to the office, legally be elected into the senate of their several communities.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHILST I was dispatching, at my apartments in Prusa,* some affairs, sir, relating to the public, with an intention of leaving that city the same day, Asclepiades, a magistrate, informed me, that Eumolpus had appealed to me from a motion which Cocceianus Dion made in their senate. Dion, it

* At the foot of Mount Olympus.

seems, having been appointed supervisor of a public edifice, desired that it might be assigned † to the city in form. Eumolpus, who attended as counsel for Flavius Archippus, insisted, that Dion should first be required to deliver in his accounts relating to this work, before it should be assigned to the corporation; suggesting, that he had not performed his office in a requisite manner. He added, at the same time, that in this building, in which your statue is erected, the bodies of Dion's wife and son are entombed: ‡ and urged me to hear this cause in the public court of judicature. Upon my assenting to his request, and deferring my journey for that purpose, he desired a longer day in order to prepare matters for the hearing; and that I would try this cause in some other city.

† This, probably, was some act, whereby the city was to ratify and confirm the proceedings of Dion under the commission assigned to him.

‡ It was a notion which generally prevailed with the ancients, in the Jewish as well as Heathen world, that there was a pollution in the contact of dead bodies, and this they extended to the very house in which the corpse lay, and even to the uncovered vessels that stood in the same room. (Vide *POT. Antiq.* v. 2. 188.) From some such opinion as this it is probable, that the circumstance here mentioned of placing Trajan's statue where these bodies were deposited, was esteemed as a mark of disrespect to his person.

I appointed the city of Nicea; and accordingly having taken my seat on the tribunal, Eumolpus, pretending not to be yet sufficiently prepared, moved, that the trial might be again put off: Dion, on the contrary, insisted it should be now heard. They debated this point very fully on both sides, and entered a little into the merits of the cause; when being of opinion, that it was reasonable it should be adjourned, and thinking it proper to advise with you in an affair which was of consequence in point of example, I directed them to exhibit the articles of their respective allegations in writing; for I was desirous you should judge from their own express representations, of the state of the question between them. Dion promised to comply with this direction; as Eumolpus also assured me he would draw up a memorial of what he had to allege on the part of the community. But he added, that, being only concerned as advocate on behalf of Archippus, whose instructions he had already laid before me, he had nothing to charge with respect to the sepulchres. Archippus, however, for whom Eumolpus was counsel here, as at Prusa, assured me he would himself present a charge in form with respect to this last article. But neither Eumolpus nor Archippus (though I have waited several days for that purpose) have yet performed their engagement: Dion indeed

has; and I have annexed his memorial to this letter. I have inspected the buildings in question, where I find your statue is placed in a library; and as to the edifice in which the bodies of Dion's wife and son are said to be deposited, it stands in the middle of an area surrounded with a colonade. Deign, therefore, I entreat you, sir, to direct my judgment in the determination of this cause above all others, as it is a point to which the public is greatly attentive. And, indeed, it highly deserves a very mature deliberation, since the fact is not only acknowledged, but countenanced by many precedents.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You well know, my dear Pliny, that it is my fixed maxim not to render myself an object of terror, either by severe and rigorous measures of government, or by encouraging accusations of treason against the respect due to my person; you had no reason, therefore, to hesitate a moment upon the point, concerning which you thought proper to consult me. Without entering into the merits of the question, (to which I would by no means give any attention, though there were ever so many instances of the same kind,) I recommend

to your care the examining of Dion's accounts relating to the public works which he has finished; as it is a case in which the interest of the city is concerned, as Dion neither ought, nor, it seems, does refuse, to submit to the examination.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Niceans having, in the name of their community, conjured me, sir, by all my hopes and wishes for your prosperity and immortal glory, (an adjuration which is and ought to be most sacred to me,) to present to you their petition; I did not think myself at liberty to refuse them: I have therefore annexed it to this letter.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE Niceans, I find, claim a right, by an edict of Augustus, to the estate of every citizen who dies intestate. You will therefore summon the several parties interested in this question, and with the assistance of Epimachus and Gemellinus, my procurators, (having duly weighed every argument that shall be alleged against the claim,) determine as shall appear most equitable.

LETTER LXXXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

MAY this and many succeeding birth-days be attended, sir, with the highest felicity to you; and may you, in the midst of an uninterrupted course of health and prosperity, be still adding to the increase of that immortal glory, which your virtues justly merit!

LETTER XC.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR wishes, my dear Pliny, for my enjoyment of many happy birth-days, amidst the glory and prosperity of the republic, were extremely agreeable to me.

LETTER XCI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE city of Sinope * is ill supplied, sir, with water, which, however, may be brought thither from about sixteen miles distance, in great plenty and perfection. The ground, indeed, near the

* In the province of Pontica.

source of the spring, is, for somewhat more than a mile, of a very suspicious and loose nature; but I have directed an examination to be made, (which will be effected at a small expence,) whether it is sufficiently firm to support any superstructure. I have taken care to provide a suitable fund for this purpose, if you should approve, sir, of a work so conducive to the health and pleasure of this colony, greatly distressed by a scarcity of water.

LETTER XCII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I would have you proceed, my dear Pliny, in carefully examining, whether the ground you suspect, is firm enough to support an aqueduct. For, I have no manner of doubt that it is proper the city of Sinope should be supplied with water; provided their finances will bear the expence of a work so conducive to their health and pleasure.

LETTER XCIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE free and confederate city of Amisus † enjoys, by your indulgence, the privilege of being

† A colony of Athenians in the province of Pontica.

governed by its own laws. A memorial having been there presented to me concerning a charitable institution, ‡ I have subjoined it to this letter, that you may consider, sir, whether, and how far, this society ought to be licensed or prohibited.

LETTER XCIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

If the prayer of the petition of the Amiseni which you have transmitted to me, concerning the establishment of a charitable society, be agreeable to their own laws, which by the articles of alliance it is stipulated they shall enjoy, I shall not oppose it; especially if these contributions are employed, not for the purposes of riot and faction, but for the support of the indigent. In other cities, however, which are subject to our laws, I would have all assemblies of this nature prohibited.

‡ The learned Casaubon, in his observations upon Theophrastus, (as cited by one of the commentators,) informs us, that there were at Athens, and other cities of Greece, certain fraternities, which paid into a common chest a monthly contribution towards the support of such of their members who had fallen into misfortunes; upon condition, that if ever they arrived to more prosperous circumstances, they should repay into the general fund the money so advanced.

LETTER XCV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS, sir, is a person of great probity and learning, as well as of noble birth. I was so much pleased with his disposition and manners, that I have long since invited him into my family, as my constant guest and domestic friend; and my affection for him increased the more I discovered of his character. Two reasons concur to render the privilege * which the law grants to

* By the law for encouragement of matrimony, (some account of which has already been given in the notes above,) those who lived bachelors, were declared incapable of inheriting any legacy by will; so likewise if, being married, they had no children, they could not claim the full advantage of benefactions of that kind: (*Lipsii Excurs. in Tac. An. 3. c. 24.*) Thus Nævolus, in Juvenal, very humorously urges his gallantries in his friend's family, as a meritorious piece of service which he had done him:

*Nullum ergo meritum est, ingrate ac perfide, nullum,
Quod tibi filiulus, vel filia nascitur ex me?—
Jura parentis habes; propter me scriberis heres;
Legatum omne capis, necnon et dulce caducum.*

Sat. 9. v. 82, &c.

And owest thou nothing then, ingrate! to me,
That from my loins you sons and daughters see?

those who have three children, particularly necessary to him; I mean the bounty of his friends, and the ill success of his marriage. Those advantages, therefore, which nature has denied to him, he hopes to obtain from your goodness, by my intercession. I am thoroughly sensible, sir, of the value of the privilege I am asking; but I know, too, I am asking it from one, whose gracious compliance with all my desires I have amply experienced. How passionately I wish to do so in the present instance, you will judge by my thus requesting it in my absence; which I would not, had it not been a favour which I am more than commonly anxious to obtain.

LETTER XCVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You cannot but be perfectly sensible, my dear Pliny, how reserved I am in granting favours of the kind you desire; having frequently declared

A parent's privilege by *me* you gain,
And the rich legacy in *full* obtain.

Pliny therefore alludes to this law, when he mentions the bounties of Tranquillus's deceased friends, as one reason why it was expedient for him to obtain the *jus trium liberorum*, viz. in order to entitle him to the full benefit of their several bequests.

in the senate, that I had not exceeded the number which I assured that illustrious order I would be contented with. I have yielded, however, to your request; and have directed it to be inserted in my register, that I have conferred upon Tranquillus, on my usual conditions, the privilege which the law grants to those who have three children.

LETTER XCVII.*

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is a rule, sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for, who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning those persons who are Christians, I am unacquainted, not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, there-

* This letter is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it being written not above forty years at most after the death of St Paul. It was preserved by the Christians themselves, as a clear and unsuspecting evidence of the purity of their doctrines; and is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the church against the calumnies of their adversaries.

fore, any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or, if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession, are punishable: in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the mean while, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians, is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed, I repeated the question twice, adding threats at the same time; and if they still persevered, I ordered them to be immediately punished. For, I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation; but being citizens of Rome,† I directed that they should be conveyed thither.

† It was one of the privileges of a Roman citizen, secured by the Sempronian law, that he could not be capitally convicted but by the suffrage of the people; which seems to have been still so far in force, as to make it necessary to send the persons here mentioned to Rome.

But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An information was presented to me without any name subscribed, containing a charge against several persons: these, upon examination, denied they were, or ever had been, Christians. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense before your statue, (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods,) and even reviled the name of Christ; whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians, into any of these compliances. I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person, at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; the rest owned, indeed, they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and a few above twenty years ago) renounced that error. They all worshipped your statue, and the images of the gods, uttering imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a certain stated day before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some god, binding them-

selves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which, it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. In consequence of this their declaration, I judged it the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to officiate † in their religious functions; but all I could discover was, that these people were actuated by an absurd and excessive superstition. I deemed it expedient, therefore, to adjourn all farther proceedings, in order to consult you. For, it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration; more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions,

† These women, it is supposed, exercised the same office as Phœbe, mentioned by St Paul, whom he styles deaconess of the church of Cenchrea. Their business was to tend the poor and sick, and other charitable offices; as also to assist at the ceremony of female baptism, for the more decent performance of that rite; as Vossius observes upon this passage.

which have already extended, and are still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. In fact, this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighbouring villages and country. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived; to which I must add, there is again also a general demand for the victims, which for some time past had met with but few purchasers. From the circumstances I have mentioned, it is easy to conjecture what numbers might be reclaimed, if a general pardon were granted to those who shall repent of their error.

LETTER XCVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in the proceedings against those Christians which were brought before you, is extremely proper; as it is not possible to lay down any fixed rule by which to act in all cases of this nature. But I would not have you *officially* enter into any enquiries concerning them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime should be

proved, they must be punished;* with this restriction, however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is

* If we impartially examine the present instance of the persecution of the Christians, we shall find it to have been grounded on the ancient constitution of the state, and not to have proceeded from an arbitrary or intolerant spirit in Trajan. The Roman legislature appears to have been early jealous of any innovation in point of public worship; and we find the magistrates, during the old republic, frequently interposing in cases of that nature. Valerius Maximus has collected some instances to that purpose, (L. 1. c. 3.) and Livy mentions it as an established principle of the earlier ages of the commonwealth, to guard against the introduction of foreign ceremonies of religion. *Quoties* (says that excellent historian, speaking in the person of one of the consuls who is addressing himself to the people) *quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent? Judicabant enim prudentissimi viri—nihil æque dissolvendæ religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio, sed externo ritu sacrificaretur.*—L. 39. c. 16. It was an old and invariable maxim likewise of the Roman government, not to suffer any unlicensed assemblies of the people; as the reader must have observed by several of the preceding letters in this book; and to that fact Livy also bears witness: *Majores vestri* (says the historian) *ne vos quidem nisi quum, &c. forte temere coire noluerunt; et ubicunque multitudo esset, ibi et legitimum rectorum multitudinis censebant debere esse.*—L. 36. c. 25.

The circumstance that attended the Christian assemblies being held at an unusual hour, (*ante lucem*,) seems to have

not, by invoking our gods; let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed, ought not to be received in prosecutions of any sort; as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the equity of my government.

raised a surmise, that they were of the Bacchanalian kind. For it is extremely observable, that in the account which the Christians here give of the true design of their meeting, they justify themselves from the very crimes with which the Bacchanalians had been charged; intimating, it should seem, that they themselves had been taxed with the same: *Se sacramento non ad scelus aliquod obstringere; sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, &c.* which runs exactly parallel with the accusation against the Bacchanalians, as it stands in Livy: *Nec unum genus neque, stupra promiscua, &c. sed falsi testes, falsa signa testimoniaque et indicia ex eadem officina exhibant.*—LIV. l. 39. c. 8.

Upon the whole, then, it appears evident, that these primitive Christians, deeply impressed with the evidence of the holy religion they professed, nobly dared, at all hazard, to render themselves obnoxious, not particularly indeed to Trajan, but to the ancient and intolerant laws of the state; by refusing to join in communion with the established worship, by assembling themselves without legal authority, and by holding their meetings at a suspicious hour of the night.

LETTER XCIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE elegant and beautiful city of Amastris, † sir, has, among other capital buildings, a most noble and extensive piazza. On one entire side of this structure runs what is called, indeed, a river, but, in effect, is no other than a vile common sewer, extremely offensive to the eye, and, at the same time, very unwholesome by its noxious vapours. It will be advantageous, therefore, in point of health, as well as ornament, to have it covered; which shall be done, with your permission; as I will take care, on my part, that money be not wanting for executing so noble and necessary a work.

LETTER C.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It is highly reasonable, my dear Pliny, if the water which runs through the city of Amastris is prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, that it should be covered. I am well assured you will, with your usual attention, take care that the money, necessary for this work, shall not be wanting.

† Situated on the Black Sea, in the province of Pontus.

LETTER CI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, sir, with great joy and festivity, those votive solemnities which were publicly proclaimed as formerly, and renewed them the present year, accompanied by the soldiers and provincials, who zealously joined with us in imploring the gods, that they would be graciously pleased to preserve you and the republic in that state of prosperity, which your many and great virtues, particularly your piety towards them, so justly merit.

LETTER CII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT was very agreeable to me to learn, by your letter, that the army and the provincials joyfully seconded you with great unanimity, in those vows which you paid and renewed to the immortal gods, for my preservation and prosperity.

LETTER CIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, with all the warmth of that pious zeal we justly ought, the day in which, by a very happy succession, the protection of the empire was delivered into your hands; recommending to the gods, by whose gracious favour you received the sovereignty, the object of our public vows and congratulations.

LETTER CIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WAS extremely well pleased to be informed by your letter, that you had, at the head of the soldiers and the provincials, solemnized my accession to the empire, with all due joy and zeal.

LETTER CV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

VALERIUS PAULINUS, sir, having bequeathed to me the right of patronage* over all his freedmen,

* By the Papian law, which passed in the consulship of M. Papius Mutilus and Q. Poppeas Secundus, U. C. 761. if

except one, I entreat you to grant the freedom of Rome to three of them. To desire you to extend this favour to all of them, would, I fear, be too unreasonable a trespass upon your indulgence; which, having amply experienced, I ought to be so much the more cautious in troubling. The persons for whom I make this request are, C. Valerius Æstæus, C. Valerius Dionysius, and C. Valerius Aper.

LETTER CVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You act in a most worthy manner, by consulting the interest of those persons whom Valerius Paulinus has confided to your trust; I cannot, therefore, but encourage you, as far as depends upon me, to lose no time for that purpose. I have accordingly granted the freedom of the city to such of his freedmen, for whom you requested it, and have directed the patent to be registered: I am

a freedman died worth a hundred thousand sesterces, (or about 800*l.* of our money,) leaving only one child, his patron (that is, the master from whom he received his liberty) was entitled to half his estate; if he left two children, to one-third; but if more than two, the patron was absolutely excluded. This was afterwards altered by Justinian, *Inst.* l. 3. tit. 8.

ready to confer the same on the rest, whenever you shall desire me.

LETTER CVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

P. ACCIUS AQUILA, captain of the sixth equestrian cohort, requested me, sir, to transmit his petition to you, in favour of his daughter. I thought it would be unkind to refuse him this good office, knowing, as I do, with what patience and humanity you attend to the petitions of the soldiers.

LETTER CVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I HAVE read the petition of P. Accius Aquila, captain of the sixth equestrian cohort, which you sent to me; and, in compliance with this request, I have conferred upon his daughter the freedom of the city of Rome. I send you, at the same time, the patent, which you will deliver to him.

LETTER CIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I REQUEST, sir, your directions with respect to the recovering of those debts which are due to the

cities of Bithynia and Pontus, either for rent, or goods sold, or for any other consideration. I find they have a privilege conceded to them by several proconsuls, of being preferred to other creditors; and this custom has prevailed, as if it had been established by law. Your prudence, I imagine, will think it necessary to enact some settled rule, by which their rights may always be secured. For the edicts of others, how wisely soever founded, are but feeble and temporary ordinances, unless confirmed and sanctioned by your authority.

LETTER CX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE right which the cities either of Pontus or Bithynia claim relating to the recovery of debts of whatever kind, due to their several communities, must be determined agreeably to their respective laws. Where any of those communities enjoy the privilege of being preferred to other creditors, it must be maintained; but where no such privilege prevails, it would not be just that I should establish one, in prejudice of private property.

LETTER CXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE solicitor to the treasury of the city of Amis-
sis instituted a claim, sir, before me, against Julius
Piso, of about 40,000 denarii,* which were pre-
sented to him by the public above twenty years
ago, with the consent of the general council and
assembly of the city; and he founded his demand
upon certain of your edicts, by which donations
of this kind are prohibited. Piso, on the other
hand, asserted, that he had conferred large sums
of money upon the community, and, indeed, had
expended, in liberalities to them, almost the whole
of his estate. He insisted upon the length of time
which had intervened since this donation, and
hoped that he should not be compelled, to the
ruin of the remainder of his fortunes,† to refund

* About L.1166 sterling.

† The translator has ventured to give this sense to *reliquæ dignitatis*. It is, he confesses, a very uncommon, perhaps the single, instance of the word *dignitas* being used in that meaning; still, however, the context, together with the epithet which is joined with it, will, he trusts, clearly justify him. There is nothing in the nature of this case to make it reasonable to suppose, that the dignity of Julius Piso should be impeached; as little is it to be collected from any thing

a present, which had been conferred upon him long since, in return for many good offices he had done to the city. For this reason, sir, I thought it necessary to suspend giving any judgment in this cause, till I shall receive your directions.

LETTER CXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THOUGH by my edicts I have ordained, that no largesses shall be given out of the public money; yet, that numberless private persons may not be disturbed in the secure possession of their fortunes, those donations which have been made long since, ought not to be called in question or revoked. We will not, therefore, enquire into any thing that has been transacted in this affair so long ago as twenty

contained in this letter, or Trajan's answer. The adjective *reliqua* being added to *dignitas*, removes every suspicion of its signifying *honour*, (as the ingenious French translator, Mons. de Sacy, and his humble copier, the Italian Tedeschi, have rendered it,) for honour scarce admits of fractions, and there can be no remainder after a subtraction of that kind. The truth, it should seem, is, that, as the value of a man's estate was, among the Romans, a necessary qualification to render him capable of the dignities of the commonwealth, our author, by a figure of speech, puts *dignitas* for *facultas*; the consequent (to speak in the language of the grammarians) for the antecedent.

years; for I would be no less attentive to secure the repose of every private man, than to preserve the treasure of every public community.

LETTER CXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Pompeian law, sir, which is observed in Pontus and Bithynia, does not direct that any money shall be paid into the public chest by those who are elected into the senate by the censors for their admission. It has, however, been usual for such members as have been admitted into those assemblies, in pursuance of the privilege which you were pleased to grant to some particular cities, of receiving above their legal number, to pay one † or two ‡ thousand denarii on their election. Subsequent to your grant of this privilege, the Proconsul Anicius Maximus ordained, (though indeed his edict related to some few cities only,) that those who should be elected by the censors, should also pay into the treasury a certain sum, which varied in different places. It remains, therefore, for your consideration, whether it would not be proper to settle a certain fixed sum for each member who is elected into the council, to pay upon his admis-

† About L. 29.

‡ And L. 58 sterling.

sion; for it well becomes you, whose every word and action deserves to be immortalized, to establish laws that shall endure for ever.

LETTER CXIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I CAN give no general directions applicable to all the cities of Bithynia, in relation to those who are elected members of their respective councils; whether they shall pay an honorary fee upon their admittance, or not. It seems best, therefore, in the present case, (and indeed is ever the safest way,) to leave each city to exercise its own peculiar laws. I think, however, the censors ought to set the sum lower to those who are chosen into the senate contrary to their inclinations, than to the rest.

LETTER CXV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Pomponian law, sir, allows the Bithynians to give the freedom of their respective cities to any person they think proper, provided he is not a foreigner, but native of some of the cities of this province. The same law specifies the particular causes for which the censors may expel a member the senate; amongst which, that of being a fo-

reigner is not mentioned. Certain of the censors, therefore, have desired my opinion, whether they ought to expel a member, if he should happen to be a foreigner. But I thought it necessary to receive your instructions in this case; not only because the law, though it forbids foreigners to be admitted citizens, does not direct that a senator shall be expelled for the same reason, but because I am informed, that there is in every city several members of their respective senates, who are not natives. If, therefore, this clause of the law, which seems to be obsolete by long custom to the contrary, should be enforced, many cities, as well as individuals, will be thrown into great confusion. I have annexed the heads of this law to my letter.

LETTER CXVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You might well be doubtful, my dear Pliny, what reply to give to the censors, who consulted you concerning their right to elect into the senate foreign citizens, though of the same province. The authority of law on one side, and long custom prevailing against it on the other, might justly occasion you to hesitate. The proper measure in this case will be, to make no change in what is past, but to suffer those senators who are already elect-

ed, though contrary to law, to keep their seats, to whatever city they may belong; and in all future elections, to pursue the direction of the Pompeian law; for, to give it a retrospective operation would necessarily introduce great confusion.

LETTER CXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is customary in this city upon any person's either taking the manly robe, † solemnizing his marriage, entering upon the office of magistrate, or dedicating any public work, to invite the whole senate, together with a considerable part of the commonalty, to a feast, and distribute to each of the company one ‡ or two denarii. I request you to inform me, whether you think proper this ceremony should continue to be observed, or how far you approve of it. For myself, though I am of opinion that upon certain occasions, especially those of public festivals, this kind of general invitations may be permitted; yet when they draw together a thousand persons, and sometimes more, it seems

† See Vol. I. p. 23. note.

‡ About seven-pence of our money. The sum distributed upon these occasions, supposing the assembly to consist of a thousand persons, and two denarii given to each, would amount to about L. 58 sterling.

to be going beyond a reasonable number, and has somewhat the appearance of factious largesses.

LETTER CXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

It is with reason you apprehend, that those public invitations, which extend to an immoderate number of people, and where the dole is distributed, not singly to a few acquaintance, but as it were to whole collective fraternities, may be turned to the factious purposes of ambition. But I appointed you to your present government, fully relying upon your prudence, and in the persuasion that you would take proper measures for regulating the manners, and settling the peace of the province.

LETTER CXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Athletic victors, sir, in the Iselastick games,† conceive that the stipend you have established for

† These games are called *Iselastick*, from the Greek word *ισιλαυνω*, *invethor*, because the victors, drawn by white horses, and wearing crowns on their heads, were conducted with great pomp into their respective cities, which they entered

the conquerors becomes due from the day they are crowned; for, it is not essential, they pretend, what time they were triumphantly conducted into their country, but *when* they merited that honour. On the contrary, when I consider the meaning of the term *Iselastic*, I am strongly inclined to think, that it is intended the stipend should commence from the time of their public entry. They likewise petition to be allowed the treat your give at those combats which you have converted into *Iselastic*, though their victories were gained before that change took place; for it is but reasonable, they assert, that they should receive the reward in this instance, as they are deprived of it at those games which have been divested of the honour of being *Iselastic*, since their victory. But I am very doubtful, whether a retrospect should be admitted in the case in question, and a reward given, to which the claimants had no right at the time they obtained the victory. I beg, therefore, you would be pleased to direct my judgment in these points, by explaining the intention of your own benefactions.

through a breach in the walls made for that purpose; intimating, as Plutarch observes, that a city, which produced such brave and victorious citizens, had little occasion for the defence of walls. (CATANEUS.) They received also annually a certain honourable stipend from the public.

LETTER CXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE stipend appointed for the conqueror in the Iselastic games ought not, I think, to commence till he makes his triumphant entry into his city; nor are the prizes, at those combats which I have thought proper to make Iselastic, to be extended to those who were victors before that alteration took place. With regard to the plea which these athletic combatants urge, that they ought to receive the Iselastic prize at those combats which have been made Iselastic subsequent to their conquests, as they are denied it in the same case where the games have ceased to be so, it proves nothing in their favour; for, notwithstanding any new arrangement which has been made relating to these games, they are not required to return the recompence which they received prior to such alteration.

LETTER CXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I HAVE hitherto never, sir, granted an order† for post-chaises to any person, or upon any occasion,

† See Letter 24. of this Book; and the note there.

but in affairs that relate to your administration. I find myself, however, at present under a sort of necessity to break through this fixed rule. My wife having received an account of her grandfather's † death, and being desirous to wait upon her aunt ‡ with all possible expedition, I thought it would be unkind to deny her the use of this privilege; as the grace of so tender an office consists in the early discharge of it, and as I well knew a journey which was founded in filial piety, could not fail of your approbation. I should think myself highly ungrateful, therefore, were I not to acknowledge, that, among other singular obligations which I owe to your indulgence, I have this in particular, that, in confidence of your favour, I ventured to do without consulting you, what would have been too late had I waited for your consent.

LETTER CXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

You did me justice, my dear Pliny, by confiding in my affection towards you. Without doubt, if you had waited for my consent to forward your wife in her journey by means of those warrants

† Fabatus.

‡ Hispulla.

which I have entrusted to your care, the use of them would not have answered your purpose; as it was proper this visit to her aunt should have the additional recommendation of being paid with all possible expedition.

AN
ALPHABETICAL INDEX
OF THE
PERSONS NAMES

TO WHOM PLINY ADDRESSES THE FOREGOING LETTERS.

N. B. The Numeral refers to the Book, the Figure to the Epistle.

A.

- To Acilius, iii. 14.
— Albinus, vi. 10.
— Anianus, ii. 16.
— Antoninus, iv. 3, 18, v. 10.
— Apollinaris, ii. 9. v. 6.
— Ariston, v. 3. viii. 14.
— Arrianus, i. 2. ii. 11, 12. iv. 8, 12. vi. 2. viii. 21.
— Atrius Clemens, i. 10.
— Augurinus, ix. 8.
— Avitus, ii. 6.

B.

- To Bassus, iv. 23.
— Bebius Hispanus, i. 24.

C.

- To Calestrius Tiro, i. 12.
- Calphurnia, vi. 4, 7. vii. 5.
 - Calvina, ii. 4.
 - Calvisius, ii. 20. iii. 1, 19. v. 7. viii. 2. ix. 6.
 - Caninius, ii. 8. iii. 7. vi. 21. vii. 18. viii. 4. ix. 33.
 - Caninius Rufus, i. 3.
 - Capito, v. 8.
 - Catilius, iii. 12.
 - Catilius Severus, i. 22.
 - Celer, vii. 17.
 - Celerina, see Pompeia.
 - Cerealis, ii. 19. iv. 21.
 - Clarus, see Septitius.
 - Clemens, iv. 2.
 - Coccia, (and her husband Spurrinna,) iii. 10.
 - Colon, ix. 9.
 - Corellia Hispulla, iii. 3. iv. 19. vii. 14. viii. 11.
 - Cornelianus, vi. 31.
 - Cornelius, see Fuscus.
 - Cornutus, vii. 21, 31.

E.

- To Erucius, i. 16.

F.

- To Fabatus, iv. 1. v. 12. vi. 12, 30. vii. 11, 16, 23, 32. viii. 10.
- Fabius, see Justus.
 - Falco (Pompeius), i. 23. iv. 27. ~~vi.~~ 32. ix. 15.
 - Ferox, vii. 13.
 - Firmus, i. 19.

To Flaccus, v. 12.

— Fundanus (Minutius), i. 9. iv. 15. vi. 6.

— Fuscus, vii. 9. ix. 36, 40.

G.

To Gallus, ii. 17. iv. 17. viii. 20.

— Geminus, vii. 1, 24. viii. 5, 22. ix. 11, 30.

— Genialis, viii. 13.

— Genitor (Julius), ix. 17.

H.

To Hispanus, vi. 25.

— Hispulla, see Corellia Hispulla.

J.

To Julius, see Genitor.

— Junior, viii. 15. ix. 12.

— Junius, see Mauricus.

— Justus (Fabius), i. 11. vii. 2.

L.

To Lateranus, ix. 27.

— Lepidus, iv. 7.

— Lucinius, see Sura.

— Lupercus, ii. 5. ix. 26.

M.

To Macrinus, ii. 7. iii. 4. vii. 6, 10. viii. 17. ix. 4.

— Macer, iii. 5. v. 18. vi. 24.

— Mamilianus, ix. 16, 25.

— Marcellinus, v. 16. viii. 23.

— Mauricia (Junius), i. 14. ii. 18. vi. 14, 15.

- To Maximus, ii. 14. iii. 2. 20. iv. 20, 25. v. 5. vi. 11, 34.
 vii. 26. viii. 19, 24. ix. 1, 23.
 — Minucius, vii. 12.
 — Minutianus, iii. 9. iv. 11. viii. 12.
 — Minutius, see Fundanus.
 — Montanus, vii. 29. viii. 6.
 — Mustius, ix. 39.

N.

- To Naso, iv. 6.
 — Nepos, ii. 3. iii. 16. iv. 26. vi. 19.

O.

- To Octavius Rufus, i. 7. ii. 10.
 — Oppius, ix. 35.

P.

- To Paternus, i. 21. iv. 14. viii. 16.
 — Paulinus, ii. 2. iv. 16. v. 19. ix. 3, 37.
 — Pompeia Celerina, i. 4.
 — Pompeius, see Falco, and Saturninus.
 — Pontius, v. 15. vi. 28. vii. 4.
 — Præsens, vii. 3.
 — Priscus, ii. 13. iii. 21. vi. 8. vii. 8, 19.
 — Proculus, iii. 15.

Q.

- To Quadratus, vi. 29. ix. 13.
 — Quintilian, vi. 32.

R.

- To Restitutus, vi. 17.
 — Romanus, see Voconius.

To Rufus, vi. 22. v. 21. vii. 25.

— Rufinus, viii. 18.

— Rufo, ix. 19.

— Rusticus, ix. 29.

S.

To Sabinus, iv. 10. vi. 18. ix. 2, 18.

— Sabinianus, ix. 21, 24.

— Sardus, ix. 31.

— Saturninus (Pompeius), i. 8. v. 9. vii. 15. ix. 38.

— Scaurus, v. 13.

— Septitius, i. 1. vii. 28. viii. 1.

— Septitius Clarus, i. 15.

— Servianus, iii. 17. vi. 26.

— Severus, iii. 6, 18. iv. 28. v. 1. vi. 27. ix. 22.

— Sosius Senecio, i. 13.

— Sosius, iv. 4.

— Sparsus, iv. 5. viii. 3.

— Spurinna, iii. 10. v. 17.

— Sura (Licinius), iv. 30. vii. 27.

— Suetonius, see Tranquillus.

T.

To Tacitus (Cornelius), i. 6, 20. iv. 13. vi. 9, 16, 20.

vii. 20, 33. viii. 7. ix. 10, 14.

— Tiro, vi. 1, 22. ix. 5.

— Titianus (Cornelius), i. 17. ix. 32.

— Tranquillus, i. 18. iii. 8. v. 2. ix. 34.

— Triarius, vi. 23.

V.

To Valens, iv. 24.

— Valerianus, ii. 15. v. 4, 14.

To Venator, ix. 20.

— Verus, vi. 3.

— Voconius (Romanus), i. 5. ii. 1. iii. 13. iv. 29. vi. 15,
33. viii. 8. ix. 7, 28.

— Ursus, iv. 9. v. 20. vi. 5, 13. viii. 9.

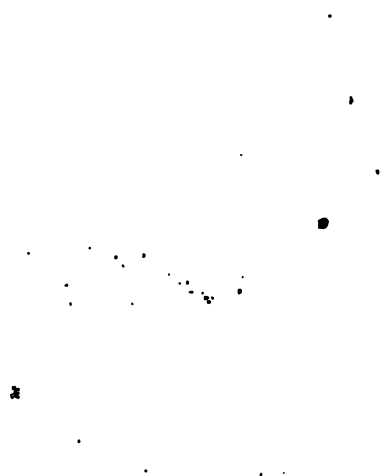
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